









MOKO.

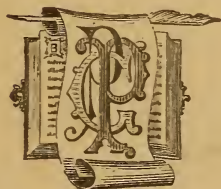
THE
HISTORY OF MY FRIENDS
OR
HOME LIFE WITH ANIMALS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF EMILE ACHARD

ILLUSTRATED

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Achard
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HISTORY

OF

MY FRIENDS.

THEY were only animals. My memory of them is mingled with that of many scratches and bites ; but they possessed some qualities which I should be glad to find more widely diffused among human beings whom the ancient sage described as : “Animals with only two feet and no feathers.”

I met with no treachery among these friends ; but, that they might not be too superior to the rest of the world, some of them were addicted to gluttony, and some to laziness.

Occasionally, even, I detected signs of malice and jealousy. However, they generally obeyed their better and more virtuous instincts.

Do not many men allow their most noble gifts to degenerate into vices? And would not many animals have the right to say to their masters, "Do you, yourselves, practice that behavior which you expect from your horse and dog?"

I will now begin the history of some animals, whom I consider it an honor to have known in life, and who thought me worthy of their friendship.

MOKO.

THE friend who was associated with my earliest life, was a monkey. He belonged to the "Marmoset" tribe, and answered to the name of Moko. In the time of Moko I was a very small child, five or six at the most. He was as tall as I, and seemed to consider me as the same race as himself. He certainly always treated me like a comrade.

During the day Moko sat astride on the balustrade of the staircase, with both hands clasped over the pommel, to which he was fastened by a light chain passed around his slender body.

From this post of observation he took note of the various members of the family, as they passed up and down stairs.

He knew all our visitors by sight, and even who among them were welcome and who were not. To the former the worthy fellow never failed to offer his paw ; the latter he saluted with a grimace.

Sometimes, even, he would tear the bottom of their clothing or send their hats flying off their heads. But, what could be done to a monkey who would fill the house with his cries, if he were scolded?

The guest passed on, grumbling to himself, leaving Moko scratching his sides and chuckling with glee.

Moko had earned for himself a very bad reputation in our neighborhood. It was customary at this time, in Marseilles, for the fruiterers to spread their merchandise along the sidewalk of the "Rue Levac," where our home then was.

Now, sometimes, Moko was able to escape, not quite unaided by his friends, and, with two bounds, would be in the street. He adored tomatoes, love-apples, as they were called in Marseilles. Had they been protected by a force of soldiers, he would have been unable to resist the desire to steal them. There they were, arranged in pyramids, and gleaming red in the

sunlight; but, by this time, the fruiterers had espied our Moko.

A grand struggle ensued, arms and tongues moving in concord. On one side were numbers and brooms, on the other, four feet and agility. Moko ran, leaped, evaded the brooms, upset piles of cabbages, slipped under the petticoats of the women, and suddenly reappeared with a tomato in each hand.

It is but fair to explain that Moko was not tempted to take all this trouble by gluttony. No! it was to gratify his artistic sense, for Moko was a colorist. Pursued by cries of rage, he planted himself on a post, triumphantly swinging his arms, and then suddenly flung the tomatoes across the street against the opposite wall, and over the heads of his enemies. Here the tomatoes were smashed, and made great red stars, the sight of which filled Moko with delight.

His opponents were now again upon him, but with one bound Moko had scrambled upon the

long pipes leading from the roof, and in a moment was on the house-top. Then from below would be heard a perfect torrent of invectives and vociferations, while on the roof appeared a whirligig of head, tail, and paws, from the middle of which issued cries resembling bursts of laughter. A fireman only could have climbed to Moko in this position, and even then it would have been impossible to catch him. The fruiterers menaced him with their fists, and Moko, who was now highly exhilarated, only leaped and grimaced the more, until hunger brought him home through the skylight.

This frolic was repeated on an average of three times a week. Tomatoes failing, Moko attacked the cherries and almonds, but these he ate.

I must confess, that under these circumstances I shared the stolen fruits. Moko generously divided the spoils, although, sometimes, he would repent later, and scratches would be the result.

There was one hour in each day when Moko's

gluttony was brought out in all its worst features, and I was always the victim.

We were in that old house on the "Rue Levac," a troupe of school-children of all ages—brothers, cousins and friends, all full of fun and roguery. An old woman had the troublesome position of taking care of us, and with many ineffectual reprimands would distribute the bread and jam for lunch.

This in our hands, and tasting the jam with our lips on the way, the whole company rushed down stairs with a great noise, and dispersed in the court, our usual play-ground. I, being the youngest, was generally last in the line, my comrades not in the least objecting to leave me behind.

This was the moment eagerly awaited by the monkey ; still he looked like such a good fellow, quietly perched on the pommel of the balustrade, seemingly absorbed in his own thoughts, that I could never make up my mind to suspect him of evil intentions. But scarcely was I within reach

of his paws, ere Moko, throwing off all disguise, would seize me by the neck with one hand, while with the other he pounced upon my cherished tartine. In his monkey mind he evidently resented the injustice of always being omitted in the distribution.

Now, I naturally resisted this maltreatment; he refused to give way, uttering diabolical yells; I screamed; brothers, cousins, and friends in the vestibule below laughed with delight at the spectacle. Finally, my small strength being weakened by despair, and the scratches which the monkey freely administered, I was forced to succumb and relinquish my tartine to Moko's greedy clutches. He took it with cries of delight, his face wrinkling with pleasure, and soon I saw my tit-bit crunched between his beautiful teeth, while I wept hot tears of rage.

But Moko was so droll and spirited, and mingled in our plays with so much waggery, bearing me no malice whatever for the wrong he had done me,

that I too soon forgot it. The next day saw the whole performance repeated.

Among our other games, which made the house a pandemonium for neighbors, and a paradise for the children, was that of fighting battles, for which we had a perfect mania.

Our army consisted of a magnificent array of leaden soldiers, and a superb artillery, in which were comprised cannon of every calibre.

We ranged our men in order of battle, different nationalities opposing each other. There were hussars, grenadiers, dragoons, and generals, who advanced, sword in hand, against fortresses made of laths and dictionaries. How astonished the latter must have been by such usage! The cannon were now put into battery, charged to the mouth with powder (for these were *real* copper cannon, and would "go off"), aim was taken, and a volley of fire ensued.

It was grand to see how the battalions were cut in two by this discharge, and how the field was

strewn with dead and wounded. Moko always assisted in these mock battles, and greatly enjoyed them, sometimes aiding us in taking out the men, and setting them up on the field. But, at the first explosion of the cannon, he leaped into the air and took to flight.

At last, one day, one of us had a fancy of making a commander-in-chief of Moko. We set a hat and feathers on his head, and girt a cavalry sword about his waist; vainest of creatures, he was in ecstasy.

Thus arrayed, he was led to the front of the two armies, and the lighted fuse respectfully presented to him by the artillery-man.

Imitative, like all monkeys, he took the fuse, marched deliberately to the touch-hole of the largest cannon (rather overcharged for the occasion), and lighted it. The cannon exploded with a formidable noise. Moko forgot that, as general, his duty bade him set a good example to his soldiers, and uttering frightful cries, he took to igno-

minious flight, forgetful of hat and feathers, which were left on the field of battle, and trailing his sword after him, amid shouts of laughter from the spectators. His sword dancing about his legs increased his terror.

He disappeared from among us until brought back by the pangs of hunger. Never again could he be induced to accept the honorable position of commander-in-chief.

At last, Moko shared the fate common to monkeys,—he died!

One day after one of his tomato escapades, he had taken refuge, as was his wont, on a neighboring roof. It was an autumn day, very windy and with some rain. He came home with a severe cold. An inflammation on the chest declared itself with a cough. In a few days he had lost all his gluttony and gayety. My tartines even ceased to tempt him. If he leaped upon me now it was to warm himself by rolling in a ball on my knees.

I brought him all the delicacies, and all the milk that I could obtain from the kitchen.

Every evening he followed me to my room, and rolled himself up in the end of the covering at the foot of my bed.

During the night I would hear him groaning and coughing, then the tears would come into my eyes as I tried to comfort poor Moko.

One morning on awakening I perceived that he did not move. I raised the covering and found the poor monkey stiff, and cold as ice. I burst into tears. Moko is dead! Moko is dead! They had to carry me away.

TIGER.

TIGER was a dog, a contemporary with Moko, but not his compatriot.

Picture to yourself an immense creature, shaggy as a spaniel, but strong as a bull-dog. He was born in Provence, but his father came from the island of Newfoundland, and his mother from the Pyrenees.

Tiger inhabited with us, in the suburbs of Marseilles, a country house where there was neither house nor country, as I will explain.

The house was a ruin, where we had discovered, on the first floor, two rooms and a pantry, and up-stairs under the roof, a bedroom, where one could stand on all fours in one of the corners, and half upright in the others.

The two rooms down stairs were at once kitchen, drawing, dining-rooms, dressing and bedrooms.

In the pantry we kept everything—fagots, all sorts of tools and provisions ; while in the chamber, hollowed out under the roof, lived the man who took care of the house, and his wife.

The country thereabouts consisted of rocks and bushes, bounded by ravines and woods, where there was nothing sown and nothing reaped.

This place seemed a paradise to us children. Here we could run about at will, and break and destroy without anybody caring. Indeed, there was nothing breakable, unless it was our heads and limbs, against the stones.

Three solitary olive trees alone adorned the space about the ruin, with the exception of a stone bench, protected by a wall.

Every Friday evening our band arrived, with a great racket, at our paradise. We always walked, carrying our provisions. When night came, we went to sleep all together, in one of the lower rooms, where we spread our mattresses from the

single door to the single window. We ranged ourselves in a row, in order of age.

With the first ray of sunlight, the flock took to flight, with shouts and laughter, and the day was spent in racing, wrestling, and play. Sometimes we would pass several days in this manner.

Tiger was our constant companion. On Friday evening, at seven o'clock, he always came to meet us. He never failed to remember the day, and when he saw us in the distance, he set out on a trot, his tail streaming in the wind and nose in air. Barking with all his might, he would spring into the midst of us, generally overturning three or four ; but, of this we never complained. It was his way of bidding us welcome. From that moment, he shared in all our races and games. Tiger was so much larger than I, that when he stood up to embrace me, I entirely disappeared between his paws.

Never was such a monster so gentle. The children could all sit on his back, roll over his sides, pull his tail and ears, plunge their hands into his

cavern of a mouth, and he never uttered a growl. But, if any ragged trespasser came about the place, if any surly dog dared to approach us, Tiger, crouching majestically before the door, had only to growl in a certain way and show his teeth, to make both trespasser and dog quickly vanish.

Tiger took me especially under his protection, probably because I was the smallest. I loved him intensely. At noon, when it was too warm to play, I would take my nap between his paws, the thick hair which wadded his sides serving me for a pillow. And, while I slept, he would not move a limb.

But, what frolics we had on awaking! At meal-times, Tiger seated himself beside us, his large head and neck appearing above the table.

His long red tongue, came and went, moved by eagerness, but his modesty equalled his appetite. He waited until some one offered him a morsel; then, to seize and swallow were with him the same thing, the wagging of his tail bearing evidence of his satisfaction.



TIGER.

The plates cleared away, we rushed into the woods. When Tiger was our companion there was no danger to be feared.

He played tag with us, and no one could catch him.

About this time a ghost appeared in the neighborhood ; I can speak with certainty, for I saw it.

He was held in terror for three miles around, although, like a well-bred ghost, he was only seen after dark, and every one ran away when he appeared.

The peasant who took care of the old ruin was an old soldier, who had taken part in the great wars in Spain. He was called Pierrette, which is a diminutive of Pierre. Now Pierrette was brave as his own sword, but at the same time horribly afraid of the phantom. This involuntary feeling wounded his vanity, and he swore he would know the reason why.

They left me sometimes at the ruin under the

care of Pierrette and his wife, a Castilian, whom he had picked up on some of his expeditions.

One afternoon, at nightfall, I sat on the bench under the shadow of the little wall. I was sitting, as children do, looking straight before me, without thinking of anything at all. Suddenly I saw distinctly defined against the black shade of the forest, a white form advancing slowly towards the house. My eyes started out of my head, and jumping to my feet, I cried, "There is the ghost," and frightful terror seized me.

Tiger was not there, for a neighbor had taken him on an expedition in the country.

At my cry Pierrette rushed out of the house. He saw me trembling, and perceived the phantom passing across the terrace behind the three dead olive trees.

The dry branches of one of them were traced in black against the white figure. Pierrette returned to the house, took from the chimney-piece an old gun which had figured at the battle of Toulouse,

slipped in the barrel a handful of shot, came out again, and walked resolutely towards the spectre, which stopped a hundred feet from our house.

It had now grown quite dark. I, trembling in every limb, and unable to move, stared fixedly at the ghost, with a superstitious fascination.

“Who goes there?” cried Pierrette, with a loud voice, when he was within a few steps of the olive trees. The phantom slowly moved both arms, but remained silent. It appeared to me immensely large; its head towered above the dead branches.

“Who goes there?” repeated Pierrette, in a voice which now trembled a little; “if you do not answer I will fire.”

The words came distinctly to my ear. I lost no syllable, and my heart beat quick enough to stifle me.

The ghost again moved its great arms, the extremities of which seemed to touch the horizon. I saw the long shroud-like draperies waving; still it maintained silence.

Pierrette lowered the muzzle of his gun, took aim and pulled the trigger. I heard the click, but no report followed.

The phantom, with a yell of infernal laughter, advanced eight or ten steps.

Pierrette, in utter terror, beat a hasty retreat ; his foot encountered a stone ; he tripped, while his gun slipped from his hands.

The ghost hastened its steps. Pierrette picked himself up and again took to flight, forgetting his musket. I saw him coming towards me, pale and out of breath. " Come," he cried, and seizing me by the arm, when he saw I had not the strength to move, he drew me with him into the house, and then carefully bolted the door.

His wife, who had seen everything from the window, now threw herself on her knees in a corner, beat her breast, mumbling prayers in a strange language, which was a mixture of Spanish, French, and Provençal, and which she alone understood. Her teeth chattered with fear. Pier-

rette, however, ventured his eye to a hole in the top of the door. Through this he saw the phantom slowly traverse the terrace and disappear round the corner of an old building, half fallen down, which we called the "body guard."

As to myself, I had fallen half dead into a chair. I believe if the thing had knocked at the door I should have died at once.

The Castilian woman spent the night in praying, Pierrette in swearing.

The next day we could find no trace of the musket, except the ramrod, which lay on the ground where it had fallen. What a ghost should do with a gun we could not understand. Three hens were also missing from the poultry-yard, and a beautiful cock, who was our especial pride, and one we had had for years.

What on earth should a ghost want with poultry? I did not try to solve the mystery of the silent tomb, but these circumstances filled me with wonder.

Pierrette plotted vengeance, yet knew not how to compass it without arms. His wife implored him to leave the devil in peace (for the devil it must be, in guise of a spectre), and to burn a candle to the Virgin. At last Tiger returned, and his presence brought a little courage to the household, where, indeed, it was needed enough. The ghost walked every night.

One evening, weary of seeing the thing coming and going at will about the place, Pierrette let loose Tiger. He made but one bound out of the house, and dashed right after the phantom.

The ghost moved its great arms. Tiger, who seemed no whit afraid, responded to this pantomime by terrible barking, and ran faster. The phantom turned and fled. In running, its long robe and its feet became entangled in a bramble. It fell full length on the ground. Tiger, who was at its heels, sprang upon the white form rolling on the ground, and seized it by the neck. The ghost uttered cries of distress. Some peasants who were

passing came running up at the noise, Pierrette came out of the house, followed at a distance by myself. I arrived thus like a rear guard on the battle-field.

We found there, struggling under two or three sheets, a country clown, who had amused himself at the expense of the poultry-yards of the neighborhood.

Naturally lazy, the bad fellow found it convenient to live on the fruits of others' labor. To this end he had adopted the profession of ghost, playing upon the superstitions of the people, and making thereby a comfortable living. Unfortunately for him, he at last met our Tiger!

The peasants surrounded the poor spectre, and laughed heartily. *They* laughed loudest who had been most afraid.

When the fellow tried to get up and disencumber himself of his spectral attire, Tiger ground his teeth. When he rolled back again and remained quiet, Tiger looked at us as if to say.

“ You see there is nothing to be afraid of. You trembled like cowards because this clown walked across your fields in a fantastic disguise ; I have thrown him to the ground, and I swear to you that he shall not rise without further orders.”

In truth, the phantom was pale as death. They sent him home with blows, and he was forced to leave the neighborhood to escape further vengeance.

You may imagine that Tiger had a good supper that evening. The best pieces were given to him. He received them as due homage, and eat them with an air of complaisance.

That supper was well seasoned with compliments. His tail, which he wagged against our legs, seemed to say, “ More ! more ! ”

I have never quite decided whether this referred to the food or the compliments.

Tiger's reputation passed beyond the village. It became legendary. He was talked of as a hero, and people came to see him from all the neighboring places. But Tiger was not proud, and con-

tinued to play with us as before. His courage was only equalled by his modesty. But this reputation caused us to lose Tiger.

Upon the fame of his exploits, a farmer, who had great flocks of sheep on the mountains, bought him and put him in charge.

A dog who knew how to combat and conquer a phantom, might well be expected to hold his own against wolves and bears. They concealed from us, as well as from Tiger, the length of the separation. If we had known the truth, we should have found it hard to bear. I have never since seen Tiger. One day, long after, returning from a hunt for sparrows and finches—the only game ever known about the place—I heard a shepherd, who was talking with Pierrette, tell the story of a brave dog, who, trying to save his flock, had given battle to a bear in the Alps. The dog had died of his wounds, after having forced the fierce creature to retreat.

This story gave me great pain, for I felt sure that the dog was Tiger.

MARIAN AND MIRZA.

MARIAN was an ostrich, Mirza a gazelle.

I shall never forget the cries of joy and admiration which I uttered when I first saw these two creatures, before this time only known from pictures.

It is not often that gazelles and ostriches are found in private houses. These two were natives of Africa, but, to their credit be it spoken, betrayed no surprise when they found themselves in a garden, after having been brought up in a desert. But I must explain how they came to make part of our family. You must know that I had a grown up brother, who was very fond of travel and adventure, and who had been sent to Tunis on some business, I do not know what.

The business transacted, he returned in a sailing vessel with a formidable cargo of all sorts of animals, concerning which his letters had made no mention.

All the loafers on the docks at Marseilles ran to witness the landing of this living freight. I confess to having been rather frightened. It seemed to me, that this must be just like the landing of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat.

There was an iron-gray Arabian horse ; half a dozen birds with bright plumage ; a white dromedary (a very rare and curious animal, my brother said) ; two porcupines, bristling all over with black and white quills ; a hyena in a cage, which I regarded suspiciously, remembering the stories that I had heard about these fierce beasts ; a panther, who played with his tail like a great cat ; a troupe of monkeys, who gave great trouble in landing, because they leaped about, uttering horrid screams ; two or three gazelles, and, finally, an ostrich, who looked down upon the whole menagerie from the top of its long neck.

Notwithstanding the protests of my brother, this whole feathered and hairy cargo was despatched at once to a menagerie, which, at this time, filled

Marseilles with the roaring and screaming of its inmates.

The ostrich and one gazelle were alone separated from the rest (I never knew exactly why), and led home amid quite a concourse of people. Everyone, besides, ran to the windows to see us pass. I marched at the head of the procession, and felt quite a distinguished personage.

Marian and Mirza (I never knew how they came by their names) were introduced into the garden—our house was never free from children. All the school-children in the neighborhood paid them frequent visits. What a racket we made from morning until night!

The ostrich and gazelle succeeded to a number of frogs, that we had all—brothers, cousins, and friends—united in transporting from the country to the city, and thrown pell-mell into a little fountain, that played its slender jet of water into an old, mossy, stone basin, at the bottom of the garden.



MARIAN AND MIRZA.

Our neighbors had been kept nicely awake for about twenty nights, by the nocturnal croakings and concerts of these batrachians, who mourned their native pools. They soon spread beyond the grass-plots and flower-beds, and were found even in the parlors and bed-rooms. We were frequently awakened in the night by one croaking at our ears, and again and again were the conversations of visitors interrupted by a frog, who would leap gracefully into the lap of an astonished lady.

As soon as Marian and Mirza were put in possession of the garden, I made a third person in their society.

I never saw intimate friends quarrel so perseveringly as they did ; not seeming to know when to leave off, but continually pursuing each other, with pecks and buttings.

No sooner did one finish, than the other commenced.

I have since thought that it might have been as

much a matter of hygiene for these Africans as of enmity. The violence of the exercise gave them the feeling of being still at liberty.

You will readily believe that all our play hours were spent in the garden. The romping there lasted from noon until two o'clock, and from five until seven. I, being so small, found means to evade rules and slip in unseen, at all hours. A door left ajar, or a half-opened window, were quite enough. These failing, I had recourse to the ventilator. Any part of my life spent away from the ostrich and gazelle appeared to me insipid.

On the stroke of twelve, we rushed pell-mell, and with mouths full of bread and jam, into the garden. Marian walked about, looking for frogs, among which she at once made a terrible massacre.

They soon became very scarce, and the last ones, like prudent creatures, took refuge in the cracks of the walls, or the topmost branches of the pear tree, anywhere out of reach of her long neck.

How grotesque were her efforts to reach them! As soon as we were in the garden, my brother took me by the arms, and tossed me on the back of the ostrich.

Marian, who would not allow that she had been born in an egg to perform the work of a horse, spread her great wings, and set out on a round trot.

Mirza followed at Marian's heels, using her horns as spurs, to urge the ostrich to greater speed.

A lively race ensued, animated by the shouts of my comrades, and the cracking of half a dozen whips. This race in the garden both amused and frightened me. Crying and laughing at the same time, I put my little arm around Marian's neck, and held on with all my might.

When Mirza's horns seemed too sharp, the ostrich would kick, and I would have hard work to keep my place.

The race, indeed, generally finished by my being thrown head over heels on the grass, when Marian

came to a halt, and stood regarding me triumphantly out of her little eyes.

We soon discovered that Marian had a taste for exploring. On the slightest pretext, she would leave the garden, her legitimate domicile, Mirza always at her heels.

Sometimes, we children left the doors open on purpose. When they discovered this, the creatures started off, one walking, the other leaping, while we, hidden in the corners, watched their proceedings.

Before long, cries from within told us that the delinquents had been discovered by a servant, and a fantastic chase commenced, always at the cost of some glass-ware or ornament.

One day, Marian, in her rambles, encountered a closed door. She tapped against the panel with her beak.

"Come in," responded a voice from within.

Marian pushed with all her strength against the door, which finally yielded, and she entered.

At the apparition of this visitor, a group of ladies, who were calling at the house, started up in confusion, screaming, and waving excitedly, shawls and parasols.

It was a regular panic. Marian, who had not expected such a reception, beat her wings, and started on a gallop, thinking, no doubt, that it was a new sort of play.

Mirza, who came bounding behind her, became entangled in a lady's dress, and a general helter-skelter ensued.

We children were almost stifled with laughter, and on their return to the garden, Marian and Mirza received praises and embraces.

Emboldened by success, Marian, having found the gate leading to the street one day open, profited by the opportunity to take a walk.

She had not made five steps before she was perceived by a little street boy, who pointed her out to some ragamuffins, who were playing marbles.

A hunt was quickly organized. In five minutes,

the whole neighborhood, from the "Place Saint-Ferrol" to "La Lannebierre" had joined in the fun.

There was not often such game loose in the streets of Marseilles. I came last in the crowd, crying, "Oh, don't hurt her, don't hurt her!"

She was, at last, brought to bay, in a court, the entrance to which was at once blocked up by the crowd. Slipping, like a needle, between the people's legs, I succeeded in reaching Marian, who was trembling all over, and ready to die, with fear.

By my entreaties, I persuaded the policeman to take her home, safe and sound.

If Marian was indefatigable in her walks, she was not less so in her appetite. This was constant, equal, and prodigious.

As soon as any one came near her, she opened her beak, and swallowed everything put in.

I always brought her my two pockets full of bread, and my basket full of cabbages and heads of

lettuce. She never intimated that she had enough. I believe, if she had been allowed, she would have eaten the basket.

Mirza, who, on her part, browsed daintily on the choicest clover, and munched the most appetizing grains, seemed to feel quite a contempt for Marian's gluttony.

About this time the house in the "Rue Montgrand" was thrown into a great commotion.

The fountain and basin which ornamented our garden were not alone used as a home for poor frogs. They also furnished water to fill the great tubs in which the clothes were washed, which the servants afterwards hung to dry on long lines stretched from tree to tree.

Now, an extraordinary mortality made its appearance among the pieces of linen thus exposed to sun and wind.

There was a regular depopulation. Everything vanished, handkerchiefs, and caps, chemisettes and stockings, whether they were spread wet and drip-

ping on the lines, or left soaking in soap and water in the earthen vases, so much used in Marseilles, and called there "tians," no one ever saw them again. It was a perfect epidemic; whether, a plague or a burglary, no one knew.

There was great consternation in the kitchen, and in the servant's hall, lamentation and mourning.

One bemoaned a head-dress, another a pair of stockings. They said it must be either the worst kind of a thief, or an evil spirit. But what spirit would choose our garden for its depredations

One day a pair of gloves, left by chance upon the window sill, disappeared five minutes after. The next a cravat, hung across a branch, vanished in the twinkling of an eye.

We sought everywhere, amazed; Marian following our movements with that pretentious manner peculiar to ostriches.

Nothing was found.

At last one morning we heard a cry of triumph

from the garden announcing that the thief was discovered. The thief was Marian.

We all ran to the spot and saw the housemaid pointing towards Marian, who was gravely promenading her favorite walk, but giving slight signs of discomfort.

The end of a cambric ribbon hung out of her beak, down over her breast. A great ball-shaped protuberance was evident in the middle of her neck ; and, while walking with an affected indifference, she made all the time great efforts to assist this lump down her throat into her stomach.

I sprang towards her and seized the end of the tell-tale ribbon. One vigorous pull brought the full length in my hand.

Marian pulled on her side, I would not give way ; soon the end of a cap appeared. Marian began to run, I held with all my might by the trunk of a plum-tree, and suddenly the neck of the ostrich elongated itself, and a cap ornamented with lace and ribbons fell to the ground.

But in what a condition! “Will they never put this wicked beast on the spit?” cried the owner of the poor half-digested head-dress.

This time paternal authority interfered.

An ostrich, even from Tunis, who lived on head-dresses and chemisettes, was too expensive a luxury. My father pronounced her banishment.

Marian was sold to one of those collectors of curious beasts, who frequent fairs. My heart was torn with grief at bidding her adieu. She had so often thrown me on the ground, and it is these things which attach us to our friends.

Mirza did not share her exile. That would have seemed too much like a repetition of the story of Joseph sold by his brethren.

A friend obtained grace for her, and she was taken to the country and placed in a beautiful enclosure in the woods.

One day, urged by the love of adventure, she broke the fence and escaped into the forest.

We never saw her again.

COCO AND MARQUIS,

OR

THE BEAST WHO HISSES.

THIS was a horrible beast, whom I never saw, and yet who was able to give me many uneasy nights.

It appeared sometimes in the shape of a dragon with many heads ; sometimes of a monstrous serpent, provided with a forked tongue, always ready to poison any unfortunate child who came within its reach. I am not quite sure that it did not have the faculty of throwing this tongue to a distance, like a javelin.

I tried to find its description in fairy tales, and what they relate of the Hydra of Lema leads me to believe that the “ Beast who Hisses ” must be a descendant of this fabulous product of mythology.

The monster who so terrified me was especially characterized by the fact of his hissing. By this

he proclaimed his vicinity, and by listening carefully one might escape in time.

Now I must explain how Marquis, who was a mule, and Coco, who was a dog, were connected with "the Beast who Hisses."

This was some time after Marian and Mirza had given us so much pleasure in the little garden of the Rue Montgrand.

I had now grown into a school-boy. At this time our band of children frequently took the road towards a certain country house called "La Guérine." Here, indeed, were both house and country. There was even a park, and in this park lived the "Beast who Hisses."

On Friday evening, a wagon, drawn by a single mule, would stop at our door. Shouts of joy hailed its arrival.

You need not think that this mule was like the small weakly animals one sees in Paris. This was a superb creature, tall as a horse and strong as an ox. The wagon was furnished with

a mattress, upon which our little persons could rest comfortably, and we were protected from the sun and rain by a brown awning.

At this epoch, separated from the present by four or five revolutions, this was all the carriage considered necessary for small boys.

Once tumbled pell mell on the mattress, sitting or lying down, a confusion of legs, some hanging outside, some crossed under us, Marquis received a blow with the whip, and we started off on a walk.

We travelled like kings visiting their kingdom.

La Guerine was situated some leagues from Marseilles, on the left of that sandy road, the ugliest in all France, which connects Aix with the prefecture of the "Bouches du Rhone."

The landscape is gray, the road is gray, the fields are gray, the horizon is gray.

You advance in a veil of gray mist, a mist made of dust; a passing carriage is a rolling cloud. The wheels sink in the sand where feet would quite disappear.

In the mist which reaches from earth to sky, only stirred by sharp squalls of wind, the sun appears round like a shield of red metal.

The people walking by, and the mulberry trees, which grow with rounded tops along the road, are always covered with the white dust.

Marquis walked through it all as though he journeyed in the freshness and verdure of an oasis.

I never knew a more vicious animal than Marquis. His great delights were kicking and biting. When he succeeded in doing mischief, he shook his sides. This was his way of laughing. Marquis almost always kept his ears crossed, which, in mules, is a sign of ill humor.

We loved Marquis, notwithstanding his hateful character, because he represented for us liberty and country life.

He never pulled us because it was his duty, but because he was obliged to, and his chief idea seemed to be to try if he could not break the traces by sudden starts.

Sometimes he succeeded, and then his joy was expressed by neighing.

The driver, who corresponded very well with the wagon and harness, punished him with blows, but the neighing did not cease.

Marquis, like the little Spartan of the Greek legend, was willing to bear pain for the sake of victory. We cannot calculate how much pleasure the sight of a broken trace can give to a mule.

If a great stone or other obstacle lay in our road, Marquis never failed to drag us over it, or, if it were possible to pull us into a particularly deep rut, in we went. Thus our ride was a succession of jolts.

I do not think that we bore him any malice for his tricks. They, at least, contributed variety to our drives.

Occasionally Marquis would succeed in overturning the whole party on to a heap of stones. Then it was that he experienced true happiness.

I remember yet his expression of glee as he

looked down upon us struggling to get to our feet again in a bed of dust and stones.

The only virtue that Marquis could lay any claim to, was frugality. He lived upon thistles. I think if we had only given him ropes to eat he would have been satisfied.

Beyond Septenec, a gray village among gray rocks, the wagon entered a desolate place called "The Plain," bounded by a circle of little hills covered with low trees. Here and there was a river, about which the wind whistled. No trees, except a few almonds, and not a single path. The wheels grated on the naked rock. Here we descended from the wagon to play. Marquis browsed here and there on some lavender twigs, or tufts of rosemary, less for the pleasure of eating than for that of pulling them up.

We went on to meet Coco. Tiger used to come bounding to meet us at "Trois Lucs," but Coco, guardian of "La Guerine," awaited our approach, seated modestly upon his haunches, in a certain

place that we knew very well, where the rocky undulations of the " Plain " sloped towards a neighboring road.

From far away we could distinguish his massive *silhouette* against the pale sky near the horizon, where the day was fading.

Nothing could be more characteristic of the two dogs than their different ways of meeting us.

While Tiger barked and bounded about us, Coco remained silent and immovable ; a slow wagging of his short thick tail alone expressed his pleasure at the meeting.

Now Marquis was black, Coco was brown. One had a smooth skin, the other a velvet coat. One was as wicked as the other was good, nevertheless, a strange but tender friendship, united the two.

Coco was indeed the only friend of Marquis.

He hardly moved from the place that he had chosen to await us, until the mule, shaking his bell collar, placed his fore hoofs upon the paws of his friend.

Then the dog raised himself, the mule lowered his neck, their noses met; in their way they embraced, and having thus rendered homage to friendship, Coco would deign to notice us, responding gravely to our caresses by more lively waggings of his tail, and escorted us to the beautiful park of La Guerine, which was the scene of our innumerable depredations and frolics.

(How many peaches, existing at noon, that by night had vanished—how many fig-trees were pillaged!) There was a large basin, shaded by weeping willows and filled by a fountain that rippled its fresh clear water. On this pond, which seemed to me immense, we could sail our boats, but it was too deep to allow boys full liberty of bathing. We were forbidden to go into the water, and here began the invention of the beast who hisses; whose existence I no more doubted than that of Marquis or Coco.

This terrible beast had been appointed guardian of the pond, about which they told us; it roamed



COCO AND MARQUIS.

without rest, day and night, and we ought to see how it crunched the bones of children with its great teeth, especially did it relish the taste of school-boys. Oh! it was horrible.

Commands might not have been sufficient to keep us from the pond, but the thought of the "Beast who hisses," hid in the thick woods, made us shudder. We played tag, and prisoner's base in the park, where there were many thick hedges, homes of squirrels and blackbirds, but here we were always followed by Coco.

But Coco did not imitate Tiger. He took no part in the races and games. He only sat still and looked on.

When Coco was near, I was not afraid, although how I could expect this formidable beast to be intimidated by a poor old dog like Coco, I cannot tell.

At the least hissing, that, by chance, came out of the shade, we all ran together; if it continued, we started in full retreat, not daring to look back,

and sure that the "Beast who hisses" was in pursuit. If the hissing increased, our flight would become helter skelter.

Sometimes it was only a little herdsboy, who drove before him his flock of goats, or less still, a blackbird whistling his song in a thicket.

Coco trotted quietly behind us, without in the least understanding the cause of the sudden flight.

Once, I remember, that the hissing seemed to come from a hedge by which we were passing. Coco suddenly stopped. It seemed to us that the foliage moved. There was then no more doubt. It was the Beast. A general stampede followed, only ceasing when we came within the shadow of the house. Coco walked slowly, as a rear guard. What in truth was indifference, seemed to us devotion. The dog had, at least, saved our lives!

When he came to us he was overwhelmed with cakes and caresses. These he swallowed without coaxing, although his attitude seemed to say,

“Why this attention?”

He did not complain, but the cakes almost made him ill. Coco always spent the night in Marquis's stable, although he had his own warm niche in the kitchen. Every evening he joined his friend, and slept between his paws. It was a mystery how such a good and such a bad character could sympathize. When morning came, they saluted each other, and each went about his own business.

One evening we were returning from a long walk in the country. We had been to a farm called “Jasselet,” with Coco, as usual, as our companion. It was in autumn, and as the night came on, it grew very cold and windy. We hastened, the frozen earth echoing our footsteps.

As the darkness deepened, we turned into a cross road, talking in low tones. Suddenly, Coco raised his nose, sniffed the air, growled, and started.

The thought of the "Beast who hisses" crossed our minds. The walk changed to a run. We could not yet see the white walls of "La Gue-rine." Coco had disappeared in the darkness.

While running we did not exchange a word. Suddenly a growl broke the silence, followed by another growl, low and plaintive. Our flesh crept. Which one of the two beasts had strangled the other?

At the earliest daylight, with my ears still full of those two growls, I ran to the stable of Marquis. He looked at me in an irritated way, as though he said, "What have you done with my friend?"

No one had seen Coco. We all set out to seek him in the direction he had taken.

Some traces of a struggle led us to the hillocks. Soon one of us uttered a cry. Among the bushes were some pieces of a velvety skin, and some bones lying on the grass. A collar that had belonged to Coco, with the marks of teeth in it, and

red with blood, was on the ground. Coco was dead, and we wept his fate. Round about the bones and the collar the soil was scratched up by strong claws, which had torn away the earth to the rock.

A shepherd passed by.

"It is a wolf," said he, upon seeing the imprints.

What, a wolf! Each of us felt a retrospective terror when we thought of the danger we had run on returning from "Jasselet." So a wolf, which, driven by hunger, had followed us, had carried off Coco.

Marquis neither ate nor slept for several days. He seemed to be always watching for Coco.

Some time after, when I was almost grown up, I made a visit to "La Guerine," and asked for Marquis. They took me to the court where Marquis, in company with two other mules, was eating oats. From time to time he tried to bite one of his comrades.

"He is always the same," said the driver, cracking his whip.

I called Marquis, putting my hand on his black shoulder. He started and turned, then trotting away, flung a kick at me which fell into vacancy.

Then I understood that he recognized me.

JACK.

THE poor beast bearing this name was a bear, and I have never seen one more ill-treated by fate.

It was about the time when the "Beast who hisses" hissed, that during the following vacation I was sent on a journey under the care of a worthy man, who was going to visit his home ; I don't know why.

The day on which I set out for Apt, it seemed to me that I had undertaken a far distant expedition, like those I had read of. Extraordinary adventures could not fail to fall in my way.

A clumsy vehicle, which went at the slowest pace possible, flattered by being called a diligence, transported us, together with two or three peasant women, an old monk, who was on a pilgrimage, and any number of parcels that the conductor

(who slept most of the time) had engaged to deliver along the route.

This style of travelling would not please school-boys of the present day, accustomed to the lightning speed of the railway train.

During the journey the only enjoyment consisted of breathing the dust-laden air, the warmth, the jolting, and a slowness which seemed like standing still.

However, all these drawbacks did not prevent my enjoying myself immensely. I wanted to cry out to every one we met,

“ I am going to Apt.”

Every time they changed horses I looked about for new discoveries.

Of Apt, I have but a confused reminiscence of an ash-colored town with ash-colored surroundings. The bear drove all else out of my mind.

The bear lived in an inn at which my worthy guide and I put up.

It consisted of an immense stable, opening

square on the white road, and of which the upper story was adorned with red curtains that flamed in the sun.

Two long racks, well known by all the mules and donkeys in the neighborhood, went round the stable. On entering, one was greeted by a pleasant odor of hay.

All children are curious, and this great stable, so high, wide, and deep, astonished me by its dimensions.

While I was looking around me, my attention was attracted by a sort of velvet ball, which had the color and form of a great chestnut. I approached it cautiously.

The ball seemed animated by a regular respiration. It looked like an enormous cat with a shaggy coat. I then saw that it was fastened to the rack by a chain. This made me think that I had better find out what sort of animal this was before advancing nearer, especially as the place was very dark. At this moment a man, who

seemed to have been sleeping on a bundle of hay, sat up and said :

“ You need not be afraid, he will not hurt you.”

And then going up to the ball, “ Poor Jack,” said he.

The creature grunted and raised himself on his feet, which before had been hidden.

It was a bear !

Poor bear ! I never saw a creature so unclean, dishevelled, sickly, scratched, and melancholy.

The man, who perceived my astonishment, shrugged his shoulders, and, throwing a piece of black bread to the beast, said :

“ What is the matter ? Is not Jack happy ? ”

The fact is, that Jack had one ear torn, twenty sores on his back, the skin was torn off his sides, and he might have rivalled in thinness the lean kine of Pharaoh. The keeper of the bear told me his history.

Jack was born in Spain, on the side of the Pyrenees overlooking Catalonia. He had been

caught very young and taken to the French side of the mountains, to the village of Ercé, where the education of bears was quite a profession.

Jack was a well brought up bear of his species.

At one year of age, he was capable of earning his own living ; and at the time he set out to make the tour of France, he knew how to play the hunter and the shepherd, with an old hat with which he adorned his worthy head. He could also dance very well.

At the beginning of this tour, Jack formed part of a caravan, composed of a chamois, two monkeys, a red and blue paroquette, and a bear. The bear was Jack.

One monkey travelled on the bear, the other on the chamois, in company with the paroquette, with which he quarrelled unceasingly. It was nothing but scratches and peckings between them.

At last the chamois died of fatigue ; one of the monkeys died of cold, the paroquette of hunger. Of all the caravan, which had been the admiration

of Languedoc and Provence, travelling to the sound of drum and fife, there remained only the bear and one monkey.

The monkey was the torment of the bear.

“ There, look at him ! ” said the keeper.

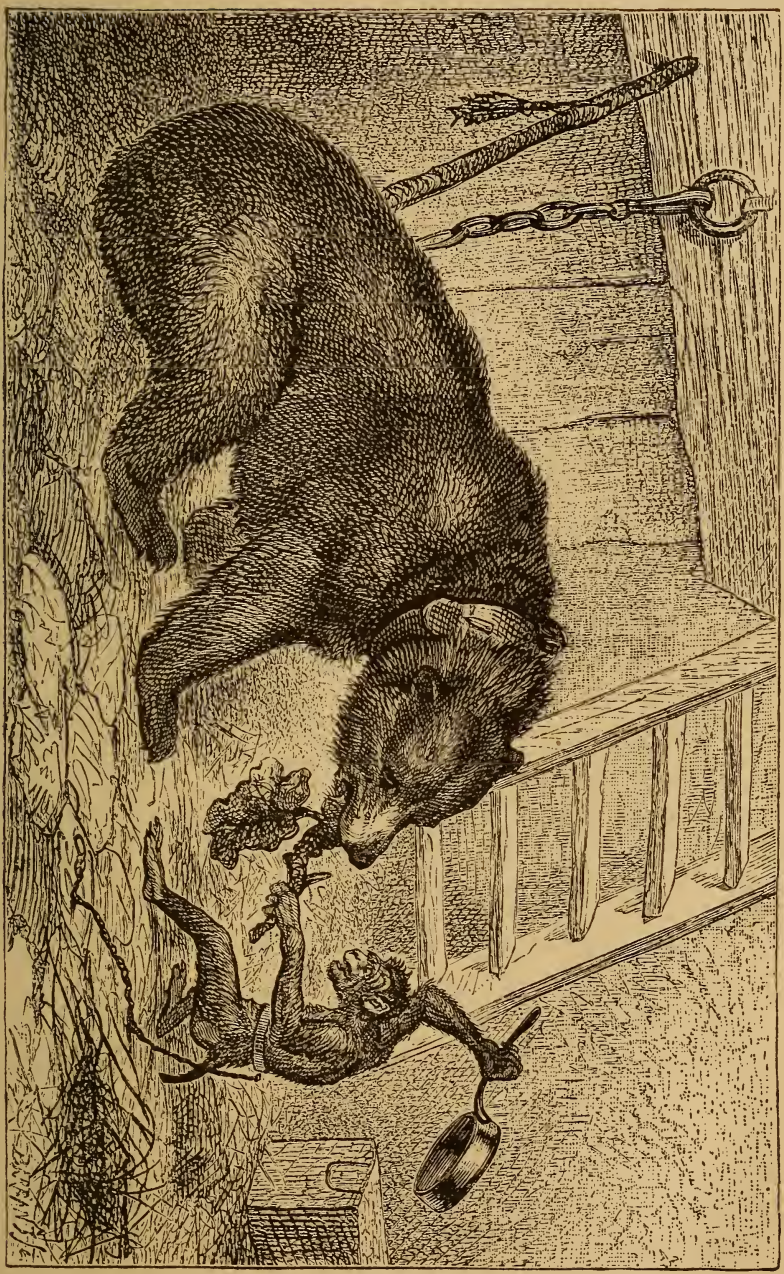
A monkey, which I had not before seen, leaped down from the rack, where he had been asleep in the hay, and took the bread from between the great paws of the bear.

Jack, robbed of his breakfast, struck out with his paw, but without touching the thief.

The monkey, who was malicious as well as greedy, sprang upon the back of his great comrade with spitefulness, scratching and biting him, even on the face, in the most shameful manner. The bear growled, but how can one take vengeance on an enemy when he is on one's neck and back,

If the keeper had not taken a whip, the monkey would have been slow to leave off. He ran away with a tuft of hair in each hand.

The monkey was a perfect blackguard, without



JACK.

any sense of shame. There never was a more vicious animal. There was no sort of roguery that he did not invent, to try the patience of poor Jack. He, poor fellow, had to bear it all.

One afternoon, at the resting-time, the monkey, who was gambolling about, upset a jug of wine that a servant had forgotten, on a bench.

The monkey, frightened by the noise that the jug made on falling to the ground, jumped up on the hay-rack. The servant, who was playing cards in a corner, ran to see what had happened.

There was the monkey on the rack, gesticulating, and pointing towards the bear, thus impressing the belief upon the man that Jack was the culprit.

The servant loudly claimed the price of his wine. The showman, being obliged to pay it, poured out his wrath and blows upon poor Jack. The monkey laughed at the success of his stratagem.

"When I arrived," said the keeper, "it was too late to save the bear, and I could only comfort

him with a piece of apple." This keeper was called Escalon, and was, as well as keeper, a friend of the bear.

He had been a mountebank, and had broken his leg, in making a dangerous leap.

The limb being badly mended, he was made a cripple for life. To gain his living, he had joined the troupe of a showman of strange animals.

His friendship for Jack led him often to share with him his miserable pittance, as the bear received little from his master, except blows.

The master entered at the moment when Escalon, giving Jack a leaf or two of salad, saved from his own breakfast, had just finished his history.

"Do not speak of it," he whispered to me, blushing, "or the master will cut down my portion."

This master looked like an ogre. He had two long arms, terminated by huge, knotty hands, a great head, with bushy hair, a round back,

a red face, and a large mouth, in which could be seen four or five tusk-like teeth.

"Prepare to be off!" he cried, swinging a knotty club that was attached to his belt by a leather cord.

The bear arose; the monkey leaped upon its back, Escalon took the chain, and the showman led the way, beating upon the tambourine and playing the fife.

A troupe of loafers followed at their heels, and I came last of all.

It was fair-time in Apt, and the bear was obliged to dance in the streets all day. He had brought on a fever by this over-exertion. Every night, being overcome by fatigue, he fell asleep between every dance, but was awakened by blows from the club.

I felt a deep pity for this poor animal, and found a hundred pretexts to visit him in the stable. Escalon always welcomed me, for I generally brought a piece of bread or some apples for Jack in my pocket; never anything for the monkey.

I threw these delicacies to the bear, and he car-

ried them to his mouth with his great paws. When I entered he would make a motion with his ears, which led me to believe that I was recognized.

“Don’t be afraid; you can touch him,” said Escalon.

At last I took courage, and smoothed his fur with the tips of my fingers. He regarded me out of the corners of his eyes without moving. I grew bolder and laid my hand on his back, then upon his shoulder. I ought to say that he was muzzled.

My vanity was flattered by the thought of this familiarity with a bear. “Why, when I tell them at home, they will hardly believe it,” I thought.

From that time I formed the habit of following Jack about the town, and never missing one of his performances. I imagined this would please him.

On some particular holidays, Jack was called for, to do battle with dogs. This brought a great profit to the proprietor, who erected a sort of canvas tent into which no one could enter without paying.

The owners of the dogs brought them there, and, having first excited them, let them loose against the bear, who was chained to a post.

Jack was born good. Naturally gentle, he fought without anger. Fighting without anger, he was often beaten. Then the spectators applauded. But, if the tooth of a dog entered too deeply into his flesh, he showed what he was capable of, and, with one blow of his vigorous paw, freed himself from his adversary, who fled, barking, and did not return.

One day, the dog was killed at once by the mighty blow. But daily battles exhausted Jack. At this time I learnt his tender heart.

The monkey who had tormented the bear, bitten, scratched, and reviled him night and day, died in a fit of indigestion brought on by a surfeit of stolen chestnuts.

For my part I was delighted; but the bear fell into a profound melancholy. He missed something; and he sought the monkey everywhere

with his eyes, and called him, in his way, by low growls. He mourned his persecutor. Escalon could only console him with cabbage-heads, of which he was very fond.

One evening, at about dark, Escalon not being there, a bad-looking dog entered the stable, seeking his fortune, and threw himself upon me. He was a sort of bull-dog, and I was very much frightened, although he may instinctively have meant only to play. I took refuge behind the bear, crying.

Jack, who had been asleep, his nose between his paws, raised himself and gave the dog a blow that sent him rolling across the stable. He picked himself up, and ran away. Full of gratitude, I would have embraced the bear, had I dared.

The loss of the monkey had soured the temper of the showman, whose profits he had increased by his dances and grimaces when he paraded in a general's costume.

To make up for his loss, the man increased the labors of the bear, since the fair drew to its close.

One Sunday, when the inns were overflowing with people, in the month of August, beneath a scorching sun, Jack danced from morning to evening. Escalon pitied him, while beating the tambourine. I sympathized. The bear panted, but the master, who was making rich gains, urged him on.

At sunset, while playing the hunter, Jack was taken with a shiver. He tottered and fell. A blow from the club made him rise again ; he tried to continue, but once more fell to the ground.

Squatting there, his head reeled like that of a drunken man ; suddenly his whole body seemed agitated by a spasm. He stretched out his limbs and died.

They put Jack on a cart, amid imprecations from the master who had injured him, and who would willingly have brought him to life again.

Escalon wept, drying his tears with a ragged pocket-handkerchief.

I walked by his side, and we followed the bear until they threw him into a ditch on the edge of a field.

The next day we left Apt.

JEANNOT.

I HAD quite forgotten to bring in Jeannot in the place where he belongs, and I feel quite guilty of ingratitude.

Poor rabbit! I must look far back in my history to find you. Your epoch was when the wood of "Trois Lucs" seemed to me the grandest forest in the world, a short time after Tiger had vanquished the ghost.

Jeannot was brought to us one evening by a little shepherd, who had found him in a rabbit hole, while watching his goats.

How this young rabbit had come there no one could tell; for the young one presupposed the existence of a father and mother, neither of which had ever been seen, and if they had been, no one could have explained the presence of two wild rabbits in the suburbs of Marseilles.

As, in former times, Joseph was sold by his

brothers, Jeannot was sold to us for the sum of five cents, to raise which we levied a tax upon each boy, and thus the rabbit became the indivisible property of my brothers and myself, who felt the responsibility of bringing him up properly.

Jeannot was so small that we could hold him in the palms of our hands, or carry him in our pockets.

He showed from the beginning that he intended to live, by resolutely demolishing a carrot that one of us pillaged from the kitchen. This appetite gave us a high opinion of Jeannot's philosophy.

For a poor, lone orphan to breakfast so bravely, gave evidence of a strong mind and a vigorous stomach.

Breakfast finished with a dessert of the heart of a lettuce ; the young rabbit curled himself up on a heap of grass, and went to sleep.

This confidence touched us deeply, and we set to work to build him a cabin which should be a shelter from rain and cold.

A candle-box furnished the timbers, a part of the top being left on to serve as roof. The inside was furnished with straw and hay, and a board in front was taken away to facilitate the proprietor's entrance into his mansion, where we strewed vegetable leaves, and then each of the three builders declared the house complete.

Jeannot, who was but half asleep, watched us out of the corner of his eyes ; and when all was ready, he left his hay bed and trotted into his cabin, of which he took possession at once, proving that he understood the object of the structure.

He appeared quite satisfied ; indeed he would have been foolish if he were not so, when there at once he was furnished with table, lodging, and service. He had nothing to do except to sleep, eat, and grow fat ; and from this time forth, he developed in gluttony, laziness, and curiosity.

His cabin was situated against a stone wall that inclosed the little garden, where Pierrette, by

miraculous care and diligence, had succeeded in raising all sorts of vegetables in a bed of rocks.

A hedge of hard and pointed thorns closed up the opening to the inclosure.

Jeannot the next day thrust his little nose between the interstices of the hedge, and, notwithstanding the thorns, succeeded in making his way through a hole into the garden. You may judge that he dined well that day!

At sight of the havoc committed among the cabbages and turnips, Pierrette flew into a passion. He spoke of nothing less than of strangling the delinquent; but when he saw our terror lest he should *really* injure the orphan, his anger quickly subsided. "Poor little fellow," said he.

And Jeannot received permission to pillage in the old soldier's beds to his heart's content.

He made such good meals there, that he formed the habit of taking frequent naps, and this abundant food, combined with much sleep, caused him to develop rapidly, increasing in strength and beauty.

No rabbit of our acquaintance had finer hair, more lustrous coat, ears more silky, or feet more agile. In truth, Jeannot was not a miserable cabbage-rabbit but a warren rabbit. He was of good family, and showed it by the fineness of his shape, and the nobility of his habits.

But, I was incorrect, when I said he had nothing to do ; Jeannot had to amuse us ; though we were certain that in doing this, he amused himself still more. We taught him to draw a little carriage very nicely, fastened between the traces, by an ingenious arrangement of cords.

Now, Jeannot was no more a rabbit, he had attained the dignity of a horse. This long-eared horse one day ran away. This was terrible ; but, what shouts, when we saw him galloping over stones and through briers, with the little carriage bounding at his tail ! The carriage was soon a wreck.

One of my cousins, who was of a classical turn of mind, compared the poor rabbit to the fierce Hippolyta on his chariot.

The chariot and steed were caught in the middle of a bramble bush. We had a good deal of trouble to disentangle them.

The carriage was in pieces ; Jeannot, terrified, trembled with fear. He felt, in his rabbit conscience, that he deserved punishment, and curving his little spine, indicated by his attitude what he expected to receive. But we were so glad to have recovered him unhurt, that there was no question of chastisement.

Jeannot, who had three masters, eight or ten teachers, or we might say, eight or ten comrades, possessed also one friend.

This friend, four-footed like himself, was a little black-and-white spaniel, not very much larger than a King Charles. He was about the age of the rabbit, and his character was not less jovial.

A strong sympathy united them. The one first awake in the morning would tickle the other with the end of his paw, and then the two friends

showed their pleasure at meeting again by a thousand gambols.

Jeannot, who was generous, had offered part of his house to the spaniel, who had accepted it. They looked upon it as "our cabin." They were not animals without hearth and home. Every night regularly, and four or five times during the day, they slept in each other's arms.

Jeannot had invented a play in which the assistance of the spaniel was indispensable, and the spaniel was always ready.

They played "wild rabbit and hunting dog."

Jeannot began by hiding in the wood; then the spaniel set forth with tail in air and nose to the ground, following the scent.

When he was on the trail, he started on a gallop, and bayed like a hound.

Jeannot, driven out of his thicket, gained his feet, made a thousand detours, and, always followed by the spaniel, prolonged this imaginary chase through bush and brier.

On leaving the wood the spaniel chased in full view, the tongue hanging out and ears held back.

Jeannot redoubled his speed, reached his house, and entering would put both paws on the edge of the board which formed his door-way, like a person awaiting at a window the return of a friend.

When the spaniel arrived, they embraced as animals are wont to embrace.

To this diversion Jeannot added another, which was to prepare for us little surprises.

We often took our walks along the edge of the woods (and how much terror these innocent woods have caused me!). There was, in the forest, an old dilapidated house that we called the Ruin, before which I never passed without shivering to my bones.

Jeannot, who loved a joke, would follow us secretly, and when we had gone some distance, would come leaping suddenly about our legs.

Then, what gambols we had !

We all returned together, the wisest of us some-

times taking Jeannot apart, and moralizing with him.

“Take care! Jeannot,” said he, “take care! you will play truant until you go too far, and will get into trouble!”

But Jeannot took all this in with his long ears, and the next day began again. He excused himself because he was young, and youth is naturally foolish.

Formerly there were only boys at Trois-Lucs ; now, there came little girls, too.

Naturally, they became great friends with Jeannot.

As soon as one of them came, she asked for Jeannot. Then they held him on their knees and in their arms.

They taught him numbers of pretty little ways.

Jeannot learned how to leap a rope and play dead ; stretched on a board, and stirring no limb, he let himself be carried in funeral procession.

When he had been very good we taxed our-

selves to buy delicacies. Sometimes we collected from four to eight cents.

What would little boys of the present day say, if they knew that at that distant period we felt rich with twenty-five cents, and millionnaires with a few dollars?

Our pennies collected, we bought cakes and presented them to Jeannot on our knees. One of the little girls who loved him, brought one day some burnt almonds and candied chestnuts. To all these things Jeannot, who was a rustic rabbit, preferred cabbage-leaves, which low taste astonished my cousins and made them rather indignant.

On Sunday they decorated Jeannot's neck with a collar. This adornment, which made him look very funny, seemed to please him infinitely, for Jeannot was very vain.

By seeing us continually about him, Jeannot had learned to know us; when he was called he would run, but if, as a reward for his obedience, he was not offered a salad-leaf at once, the rabbit showed



JEANNOT.

his disgust by running away, and sometimes he would not return for two hours.

Then he might be found taking a nap under the shadow of a great cabbage.

By this easy life Jeannot had grown large and fat, but suddenly a catastrophe put an end to his happiness.

One day, day of misfortune, Jeannot was taking his daily walk in the woods, browsing thyme, when a dog passed—a hound with a pointed tail and long hanging ears.

Jeannot thought that this was a friend of the spaniel, seeking a play-fellow to play "hunt" with him, and set forth. The hound saw him and started, yelping, in pursuit.

"Good!" thought Jeannot, "I was not mistaken; this is fun!"

He ran from bush to bush, from hedge to hedge, the hound always yelping at his heels. Jeannot was greatly amused.

At last he ran out of the wood and took his

course towards the cabin. At this moment a hunter appeared, a real hunter with gaiters on his feet, game-bag on his back, and gun in hand.

This man had heard it said that there were rabbits in the wood of Trois-Lucs, and had wished to see with his own eyes whether this was the case.

Jeannot innocently came out at his door; the hunter saw him, took aim and fired. Alas! he did not miss. Jeannot rolled over, and then raised himself, trailing behind him two broken legs.

We all ran at the report of the gun, but what did we see? the hound had seized Jeannot!

We rushed forward with loud cries, and arrived in time to snatch Jeannot, panting, from the jaws of him whom he had taken for a friend.

But it was too late!

Jeannot's back was broken with a single crunch of the great teeth.

He died in our arms.

One of the little girls fainted.

The hunter advanced, a little abashed. "Ah!

sir, see what you have done, you have killed Jeannot, who was so good, and never hurt any one."

I believe one of us called the hunter an "assassin."

"I did not mean it," said the man, "I took him for a wild rabbit."

A wild rabbit! Jeannot! with a silk ribbon about his neck!

In the midst of the general mourning, a big boy, he was over twelve, proposed gravely to render the last duties to the mortal remains of Jeannot.

The little girls, who were drying their eyes with the ends of their handkerchiefs, consented, thinking the idea very natural.

The big boy, who liked a joke, found a light pine box that had held crackers, laid inside a piece of fine white paper, and in this improvised coffin, we placed the body of the victim. Two little girls, on whom we put white shirts over their dresses, took the box and headed the procession, weeping hot tears.

One was four years old, the other three. A third and fourth followed, carrying lighted candles.

The big boy went first of all, bearer of a cross that he had made of two sticks ; while one of his comrades rang a bell. The rest of us followed in order ; the spaniel, with drooping tail, closed the funeral train.

When I think of this affair, I do not deny that we all deserved a whipping ; all except the two little girls who filled the rôle of pall-bearers.

The grave was made at the foot of an olive-tree, between two tufts of rosemary. There we buried Jeannot in his pine box, on the top of which some one fastened with wafers a piece of paper, bearing his name, age, and the date of his death, and on which mention was made of the regrets of his friends.

The little girls prayed to God on their knees. I was not easy in my conscience as to the propriety of this last ceremony, child as I was.

The scapegrace who had led the affair, then

delivered a discourse upon the virtues and good deeds of Jeannot, but seeing that our little companions were affected to tears, he finished with this peroration, "Console yourselves my friends, Jeannot is now happy in the rabbits' paradise."

I did not quite understand what he meant by this.

When this story was told at home, the big boy was punished as he deserved.

But the dry bread to which he was condemned, did not bring back life to poor Jeannot.

FRIQUET.

I MADE the acquaintance of Friquet one spring day in Marseilles.

Friquet was a swallow.

The little rascals who formed the population of the household, were then under the care of a young lady—aunt to some of us, cousin to others—who was rather severe in her method of discipline.

Her theories on the subject were summed up in this formula :

“ Kill yourselves, if you wish,” she would say, “ but do not make a noise.” However we did not kill ourselves, and we made a diabolical noise.

One morning a swallow fell down the chimney into the dining-room. Fortunately there was no fire in the grate, and we picked him up, unhurt by his fall ; but what a little, meagre, miserable, forlorn thing it was, and what distressed cries he uttered when he opened his beak !

My aunt adopted him, and Friquet became a member of the family.

He had ten teachers, which is a great deal for a small swallow. You should have seen how he profited by their lessons, in which the gravity of the professor was combined with the giddiness of the school-boy.

At the age of six months, Friquet was an individual of importance, whose reputation extended over the whole neighborhood.

Mischievous as a monkey, gay as a lark, jealous as a tiger, cunning as a fox, proud as a peacock, and curious as a magpie, he was the admiration of every one. I never saw so much vanity and egotism! Wherever he was, he expected to be the centre of attraction.

Had the mayor himself made us a visit, Friquet would not have been willing to forfeit any attention. The plumage of Friquet must be admired before everything.

When still very young, Friquet formed the habit,

which he never gave up, of sleeping on the top of a richly ornamented mirror, which adorned the parlor mantel-piece.

He had, indeed, a cage especially prepared for him, and furnished with little sticks, and a comfortable bed of moss and cotton-wool; but no! Friquet preferred his mirror, of which the old wooden frame was carved with a confused mixture of bows and arrows and musical instruments, environed with foliage.

Was it the love of independence, or taste for the fine arts which made him choose this retreat? He never told me.

Every evening, at exactly eight o'clock, Friquet betook himself to his nocturnal perch, on the corner of the frame of the mirror, and he was soon asleep, with his little head tucked under his wing; noise and light did not disturb him in the least.

He was a bird of regular habits, and believing that night was made for slumber, he slept as soon as it became dark; believing that day was

made for amusement, he did not fail to amuse himself.

Whenever he saw his mistress, he flew and perched upon her shoulder, where he would remain until his fancy took him elsewhere, caressing her neck and cheeks in his bird fashion. In return he expected that she would talk to him continually. If she neglected him for a moment, in order to speak to the cook, or to count the stitches in her embroidery, he would behave as one possessed.

He had not yet acquired that black beak and breast, which, with swallows, indicate that they have attained their majority ; but already he gave evidence of that terrible jealousy natural to his race.

Master Friquet could not endure any kind of domestic animal. If a little dog came to the house, he flew into a rage, and if one of the family should caress it, he would behave like a little demon, and finally, would assault, with pecks, him among his friends whom he deemed guilty of such treachery.

One day, some one gave my aunt a pretty Holland canary, who sang delightfully. When this new pet was introduced into the house, Friquet became perfectly foolish with anger. From this moment he did not enjoy an hour of repose. He had but one idea, one thought, the canary, always the canary! He grew thin upon it. He was perpetually flying about the cage inhabited by the new-comer, trying to invent new ways to torment it.

He tried to frighten it and to prick it with his sharp-pointed beak.

If the canary sang, as it was his business to do, the swallow would scream with all his might, until he succeeded in silencing his victim.

When the canary wished to breakfast, Friquet made such flights about his cage, that the poor thing lost all appetite.

At last, one evening, a servant happened to forget to close the door of the cage, the canary innocently came out, and the swallow, who was watching his opportunity, killed it in single combat.

The servant found the little Hollander dead in the morning, with a hole in his head made by the swallow's beak.

Perched high upon the mirror, Friquet smoothed his plumage and made himself fine. The wicked fellow seemed to experience a great degree of pleasure from contemplating the corpse of his rival.

No one else thought of offering a bird to my aunt, but Friquet received the punishment due to murderers, as you will see at the end of my story.

The canary dead, Friquet grew fat rapidly. He showed no remorse, only an enormous appetite.

There never existed a more impertinent bird. It was impossible to keep him in his proper place. He regarded all commands as not worth a straw.

As soon as the family were seated at meals, Master Friquet would make his appearance among them, a self-invited guest. Strangers did not frighten him in the least. With one hop he would be upon the table, and while there would not even remain in one place.

He hovered about among the napkins, examining the dishes out of the corner of his eye, was undaunted by the noise of forks and clinking of glasses, and even pecked at the biscuits. While turning a deaf ear to all observations upon his conduct, he picked up all the crumbs, and, on the whole, enjoyed himself immensely. We gave Friquet little pieces of sugar in a saucer, for dessert.

One morning, a window being inadvertently left open, Friquet was seized with a desire of exploring the neighborhood. We gave him up for lost. The servant who had left the window open was chided, and my aunt was indeed much grieved. What chance was there of ever catching such a bird again?

However, at nightfall, we heard a sharp little tap at the window-pane. This was repeated two or three times very impatiently.

My aunt, who was regarding the top of the mirror with moist eyes, exclaimed, "It may be Friquet," and ran to the window.

It was indeed Friquet, who flew into the room with a sprightly air.

But, having once played truant, he had acquired a taste for it, and the next day he beat against the pane with all his might, returning there as often as he was driven away, until it became necessary to open the window.

He spread his wings and immediately joined a flock of little comrades, who were awaiting him on a neighboring roof.

Friquet, emancipated, showed himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him. We had only to open the window a little way at breakfast-time, and he would immediately appear at the table, and do full justice to the bill of fare.

Sometimes he would appear all out of breath, and perching on the shoulder of his mistress, would look around, as if to say,

“You don’t know what a good time I have been having. Such a gay party!”

The swallow is the vagabond among birds. In

four days, Friquet had made fifty acquaintances. There was nothing to be seen among them but races about the chimneys, noisy réunions upon the leads, and meetings on the balconies ; he gained in loveliness what he lost in good manners.

Sometimes, when the dining-room window was left open, he would bring in two or three playmates to make him a visit. It was evident that Friquet was proud of his home, and was not ashamed to show it to his friends, who lodged, like vagabonds, in the open air.

One morning he appeared full of business, and after two or three little flights about the furniture, he disappeared whence he had come, carrying a shred of wool, that he had stolen from a work-basket.

Friquet had married a young swallow of the neighborhood, and expected shortly to become the father of a family.

Like a good father, he built the nest where the little swallows about to come into the world would learn how to live.

His activity equalled his playfulness. Every shred of wool or cotton became his property. He had an especial fancy for silk stuffs.

When we saw what an industrious, good fellow he was becoming, we tried to encourage him, by leaving about any material that might prove useful for his purpose.

He now spent his whole day in going and coming. This constant employment amused me immensely, and I was never tired of watching Friquet at his work. As to him, he did not in the least object to my presence.

The home which he built to receive his little family was situated between two tiles, under the roof of a neighboring house. He worked all the time, from daylight to dark. There was no more playing, no more parties on the sidewalk, no more quarrels around the chimneys. He breakfasted hastily, and returned each day to his work.

"Friquet will make a good father of a family," said my aunt.

One evening he did not return at the usual hour. There was great surprise in the house. We all stood at the window, wondering whether a misfortune had befallen Friquet. By no means ; the rascal finally appeared, and began fluttering about the room, in a proud manner.

Master Friquet was a father.

By looking carefully, I could distinguish, rising out of the nest between the two tiles, the pretty head of a swallow, who was brooding.

“ See! there is his wife!” I cried.

Friquet’s restlessness increased more yet, when the little ones were hatched. He could not remain quiet, for his was the responsibility of providing food for those little bills, all open at once, and which never seemed satisfied.

We scattered plentiful supplies of bread-crumbs and grain, to assist him in his housekeeping. Friquet, at the head of a flock of little ones, was a changed being.

He had to bring them up, to teach them to fly,

to feed them, and he entered upon his duties with great zeal. The smallest, the "nestling," as we called it, followed him everywhere. Friquet brought him to see us.

I would have liked to keep this little fellow, and put it in a cage, but the thought that this would trouble Friquet, prevented me.

When the education of his young ones was finished, Friquet returned to his former regular habits. This rather troubled me at first, for it seemed as though he had deserted his family. I reproached him for his unnatural behavior, and he did not pretend to defend himself, but I was comforted by my aunt's assurance that that had been the habit of swallows since the world was made.

The following season, Friquet proved to me that he had in truth a good heart. The winter was long and cold ; it snowed a great deal. One bitter day, Friquet tapped at the window, followed by four or five comrades, numb with cold. They all fluttered into the dining-room after him, crying famine.

We understood that Friquet had relied upon our generosity, and all my savings were expended in meal that I scattered on the balcony.

We had discovered that Friquet was curious as a magpie, fluttering among the furniture, and peeping into all the drawers. My aunt, laughingly, called him "the inspector." This curiosity almost proved fatal to him.

One evening, urged by this mania for peering into things, he went into the wood-box ; a servant, who had not yet learned his habits, closed the lid.

The next day, on his non-appearance, there was a great commotion. We looked, called, and became very uneasy. My aunt ran out upon the balcony. There was nothing to be seen. Some hours passed. Despair fell upon the household. We went from door to door, asking whether any one had seen Friquet, but nothing was heard of him.

At last, fortunately, some one wanted a billet of wood ; the servant raised the cover, and the creature fluttered out.



FRIQUET.

It was Friquet, furious, exasperated, and half dead with hunger. He knocked against all the walls, and beat every one with his wings; a few hours more and he would have died of starvation.

Friquet came to the end that seems to be destined for swallows. He was too fat for a long life. His good condition had attracted the attention of a greedy cat who lived near by. This was a gray cat who subsisted by thieving. Though a great hunter, she sometimes made but a scanty living, notwithstanding her agility.

I had often surprised her in ambuscade on the edge of the tiles or in a crevice of the wall that surrounded the garden.

"Take care of yourself," I would say to Friquet, but Friquet scorned danger.

"She has only feet," said he, "and I have wings."

One morning, when the servant opened the dining-room door, something passed her like a shadow, something silent and gray.

The woman uttered a little cry. "Friquet!" called she.

No response, and when the shutters were opened, still no sign of Friquet. Only in moving the furniture, she discovered some feathers scattered here and there. Then she saw what had happened, and called to her mistress :

"Madame! Madame! Friquet is dead."

My aunt came down-stairs, looked at the feathers, some of which were stained with blood, and fell, half fainting, into a chair.

"The cat has certainly eaten him," said the servant, drying her eyes with the corner of her apron.

And we all vowed to avenge Friquet.

My aunt inclosed Friquet's feathers in a pretty silk bag, on which she embroidered his portrait. It was very well done, and she could not regard it without tears in her eyes.

This little bag became legendary in the house. We called it "Friquet's tomb."

This age is without sentiment.

MISS NINA.

THIS time I am not going to tell you about a swallow or a parrot, poor little creatures that a cat may kill with a stroke of her paw.

My story is not even about a watch-dog, nor a bear travelling from fair to fair, dragging its chains, not at all !

No ! our business is with an American lioness, one of that species distinguished by naturalists by the name of Puma.

How did I make the acquaintance of Miss Nina ? that is just what I am going to tell you.

One of my brothers, you will remember, had brought from Tunis a dromedary, an ostrich, and a gazelle, animals which might easily pass for the beginning of a menagerie.

Now my eldest brother, who was a great traveller, returned one day to Marseilles, accompanied by a young lioness, which had first seen daylight

in the interminable forests of South America, and who answered to the name of Nina, which means in Spanish "Little girl."

I use the word "answer" as a figure of rhetoric, but when we called her, Miss Nina would set up her ears and wink her eyes; which meant, in lion language, "I hear and I understand!"

My brother, the oldest of us all, had found Miss Nina on the prairies, about thirty leagues from the suburbs of Buenos Ayres, after an encounter which had cost the life of the old lioness, her mother, who died bravely defending her young.

When taken up by the skin of her neck, Nina, who had already learned to gambol about, and swing her long tail, had the shape and effect of a great cat.

She made her entrance into the capital of the Argentine Republic on the 'pommel of my brother's saddle, and seemed by no means disconcerted by this mode of travelling. She looked all about her, seemed to feel a little astonished at her high

perch, passed her rough, red tongue over her pretty muzzle, and then, like a cat, she played with the mane of the horse, and with the red and yellow balls adorning the end of a long mantle worn by the rider

These balls seemed to fascinate her extremely. It was clear that she had never seen anything so pretty before.

At this early period of her life, Nina only loved to play, and when wearied with her gambols, to eat.

Now being a lion, she was very fond of fresh meat, and of all the variety that was offered her, she preferred sheep.

Having had plenty of beef from her infancy, Miss Nina, tired of roasts and bloody steaks, cared now only for lamb cutlets and legs of mutton. Her name, Nina, had been given her by a "Signorita" of the country, who greatly admired her elegance and the grace of her movements.

This lady gave Nina a pretty red silk collar, and

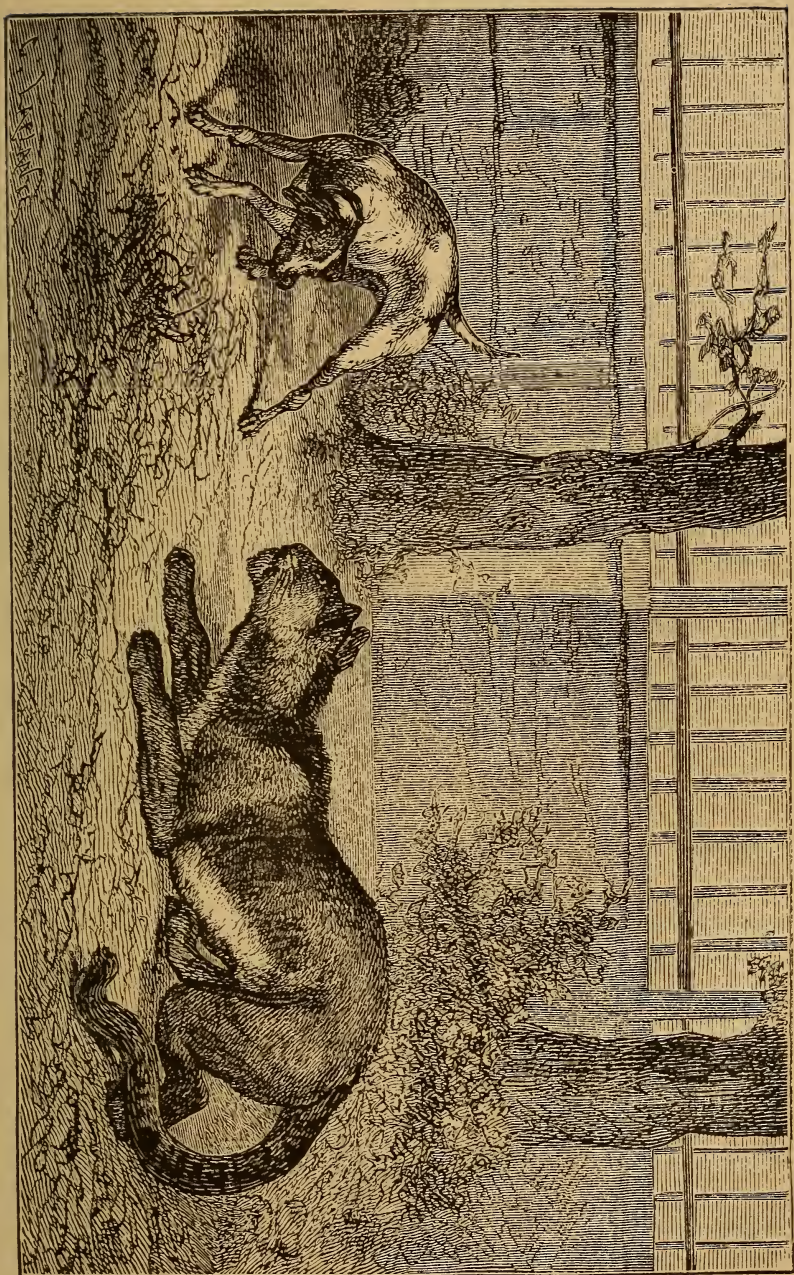
would lead her by a silk cord. Nina had no objection to following her, but her sudden appearance in drawing-rooms never failed to create surprise.

My brother gave her for a companion to enliven her captivity, a pretty little dog, with whom she lived on good terms. The two animals were enclosed in a court, or "patio" as it is called in Buenos Ayres, and there they would play and gambol in a very amusing manner.

At last one evening, dreadful cries brought every one to the patio. There was Miss Nina calmly making a meal of her friend.

This was a sad spectacle, and henceforth all little boys and girls were forbidden to approach Miss Nina. She was too fond of fresh meat.

In spite of her fierce appetite, the lioness had an almost filial affection for my brother. As soon as she perceived him she would jump for joy, run towards him, and raising herself on her velvet paws, express her feelings by rather rough caresses.



MISS NINA.

Then for a time the traveller and the lioness would enjoy a thousand plays together. I should say that on these occasions my brother was always armed with a stout rattan, with which he sometimes calmed the familiarities of his young friend, after which he regaled her with delicacies from a neighboring butcher's shop.

Miss Nina grew large and handsome, and it became necessary to give up the pretty red collar and slender silk cord, not that she seemed wicked, but her fancy might lead her some time to too great familiarity with the passers-by, and this does not please every one.

The idea of a stronger chain occurred to my brother one day when Miss Nina, having escaped, fell into the midst of a party of city ladies, who were enjoying their evening walk. You may imagine what a stampede was the result. Nina leaped and gambolled about among them, some cloaks which they had dropped in their terror served her for playthings ; she tore them into little

pieces with her teeth, and imagined the flight of the ladies was a new sort of game, invented for her especial amusement. My brother being advised, hastened to the scene of action, not, however, before Nina had destroyed many dollars' worth of lace.

Nina followed him with a good enough grace, like a school-boy who returns to his lessons after recess.

My brother left Buenos Ayres on a schooner laden with cattle-horns. It was a miserable affair, a good sailer, but very small, and half under water a great portion of the time. Miss Nina was shipped just as the schooner weighed anchor, preparatory to sailing for Marseilles. There had been made, for her convenience during the voyage, a fine strong cage, that would hold its place on the boat. She was not sea-sick, neither did the sight of the ocean produce any effect upon her.

There were four men to sail the schooner, the

captain, mate, one sailor and a cabin-boy, and but one passenger, my brother. The sailor was also cook, the cabin-boy valet de chambre.

Now the mate thought fit to fall ill, so my brother was promoted to his office, at the same time Miss Nina was raised to the rank of sailor. It was a storm which gave her this position.

The day of the storm, four pair of arms, of which one pair was very small, were not found sufficient to manœuvre the sails.

The sheets flapped about the deck, and it was not convenient to fasten them to the cleats. My brother, becoming impatient, threw the end of the sheet of the main-sail, that was waving and flapping in the wind, into Nina's cage, saying, "Hold that." The animal squatted up and clasped her sharp claws about the rope. The wind blew still harder, but the more it blew the more strongly Nina held on; and there was no more difficulty with the sheets.

After Miss Nina became sailor, her rations were

doubled on windy days. She probably wished that every day would be stormy.

When the schooner arrived at Marseilles, one of the little boats which are always rocking in the harbor took me on board, and there I first saw Miss Nina face to face.

Our first meeting was unpromising. I saw her squatting on the bottom of her cage, in a corner, with her muzzle between her paws, and her tail agitated by a nervous motion ; then she gave low growls that made her sides palpitate, and put herself into an attitude of attack. I wished to approach, but she made one bound and clung standing to the side of the cage, near which I was standing. My brother pulled me quickly away by my arm.

“Nina!” he said. The lioness fell back into her former position ; he advanced, while she lay down, still growling.

He passed his hand over her coat, and she was silent, closed her eyes, and began to play with her tail. Nina’s anger was appeased.

"You see she is a lamb," said my brother to me.

This creature had tigerish jealousies. She hated all children, but me especially, because she had seen my brother caressing me.

My brother, during the few days that she remained on board, tried to tame her towards me. He succeeded, by a happy mixture of reprimands and caresses, in making her allow me to touch her shoulder or her paw with the ends of my fingers. But what diplomacy and what delicate morsels were necessary to arrive at this result!

I was in mortal terror, but a feeling of vanity incited me, for how many of the boys could boast of intimacy with a lion?

When at last it became necessary to disembark the beast, the question was, what to do with her.

Of course she could not be brought home. Although my brother and I had boasted of the gentleness of her character, and the quietness of her disposition, my father would not listen to us.

Miss Nina was lodged in a store-house hired for the purpose. Now this was exile, and she fell into a deep melancholy, although my brother visited her always once, and sometimes twice a day.

Nina had few hours of gayety in her retired life. She pined in solitude in the obscurity of the store-house, of which the doors were always kept shut.

Now, her lodging and food were a great expense, and a change must be made.

It was now Fair-time in Marseilles. The fair of St. Lazarus lasted fifteen days, and during that time the Court d'Aix was covered with barracks, to the delight of the children.

This fair attracted to Marseilles a great concourse of mountebanks, horse dealers, and showmen of wild beasts.

A menagerie came, which camped on the plain St. Michel. This was the looked-for opportunity, and Miss Nina was sold to the proprietor.

The companionship of tigers, African lions, panthers, bears, and jaguars did not draw her out of her

melancholy. She remained crouching in a corner of her cage from morning to night, and only raised herself when my brother came. I always accompanied my brother in his daily visits. When Nina scented our approach, she would rub her nose against the bars of her cage, with transports of joy.

The spectators were greatly astonished when they saw a young man and a boy approach the cage, talking to and caressing a lion.

She would give little moans, while she licked our hands, in such a melancholy manner, that some kind-hearted women wept with sympathy.

The fair over, the menagerie left, and we had to bid farewell to Miss Nina. My brother was greatly moved, as well as I. Happily the poor beast did not understand that she embraced us for the last time.

Six months later, we heard of the death of Miss Nina. She had died at Lyons, of consumption.

BISCOTTE AND BIJOU.

FRIQUET had found his tomb in a cat's stomach ; but, Friquet dead, there remained one other bird in the house.

I had always seen him there. When he made his first appearance, he was older than I by some years. I considered Biscotte quite as part of the furniture.

Only he was a piece of furniture who moved, and had wings.

Biscotte belonged to that species of parrots who are gray, with red heads, that one sees everywhere.

He received his name on account of a particular taste he had for that sort of dry chestnuts, called in Marseilles, biscottes, and of which all the grocers of the country keep quantities for the delectation of school-boys. This taste became with him, as he advanced in years, a perfect passion.

He would crunch them by dozens, and every time a biscotte entered his beak, he had a way of expressing his delight, by winking his eyes. If one wished to be in his good graces, it must be through the means of a biscotte. I think if there were a court for the trial of parrots, Biscotte would have been brought up often enough. A day rarely passed without leaving him with a theft upon his conscience.

When I first knew Biscotte, he seemed to me a grave and composed person, who counted his steps. In his gray dress and red cap, he had the effect of a magistrate. His manners were those of a prince ; he would salute you with a haughty air, and when he tendered you his claw, as parrots do, he seemed to say " You may kiss my hand."

In my childish imagination, I always thought that Biscotte's father must have been king over a flock of birds in his native forests.

We were united by one common hatred.

There was in the house an abominable little dog,

who, to-day, would be worth his weight in gold. He belonged to a species that had almost passed away until recently, when it has been, unfortunately, revived.

Bijou—that was his name—was a pug of the true kind. He had a coffee-colored coat, a black nose, and eyes round like balls, a short thick body, with a horrid, trumpet-shaped tail.

There never existed a more ill-tempered character. He growled all the time; even while sleeping, he growled. He was also both vain and gluttonous.

Now, Bijou was always after me, barking and trying to bite me, and I detested him. These two, Biscotte and Bijou, represented Eteocles and Polynices, the one clothed with feathers, the other with hair.

What had made them enemies was a vice that they possessed equally, gluttony.

Everything had to be locked away from them. Biscotte would make quick work of a whole jar of

preserves, and Bijou could empty a plate of cracknels in the twinkling of an eye.

They would fight like beasts for a jumble.

Biscotte, who had seen me give sly kicks to Bijou, had admitted me into his friendship. He would take walks on my shoulder, and from this high position, look down scornfully upon Bijou, who was forced to go on foot.

They once had a great quarrel on account of a macaroon.

Biscotte received one every day for his dessert. Like a provident bird, he would only eat half and save the remainder for his supper. The lower platform of his perch would serve for a store-room.

Bijou, curious as a magpie, and greedy as a cat, had remarked this, and began regularly to steal the half macaroon saved by the parrot, as a school-boy will steal the top of his neighbor.

Returning from his daily walks that he was allowed to take in the apartment, Biscotte would cast his eye into his store-room. No macaroon.

He was furious, and looked under the perch and in the seed-cups, but nothing was to be seen of the lost half macaroon.

While he looked here and there, Bijou followed him with his eye, wrinkling his black nose, and looking as though he were laughing in his sleeve, and saying, "Look away, my good friend, if you find anything you will be very smart."

This daily disappearance of a half macaroon did not seem natural to Biscotte. Even a half macaroon will not vanish of itself. While seeking it, he said to himself, "Somebody has taken it." The somebody was that hateful little pug.

Animals have more reason than we think. One afternoon Biscotte put himself on the watch on top of a screen, playing dead.

Emboldened by success, Bijou, who did not think of looking so high, marched right to the perch like a rolling ball, raised himself on his hind legs, and drew the macaroon towards him with the end of his tongue. Suddenly, something came down on

him from above. It was Biscotte, who flew to the defence of his property. Taken in the act, Bijou could not deny the theft. What a duel followed!

Biscotte, who had right on his side, bit his opponent with his sharp beak, drawing blood with every bite. Bijou barked; Biscotte, beating her wings, pursued him into corners; I applauded. Bijou, entirely defeated and covered with blood, took refuge in the kitchen under the skirts of a cook, who liked him for his ugliness.

Master of the battle-field, Biscotte took the piece of macaroon and eat it joyfully. Bijou never robbed the parrot again; and this adventure made him more of a coward than ever. At the slightest sound he thought the parrot was swooping down upon him.

One evening, while occupied in digesting some of the fruit of his rapines, he perceived his shadow projected on the wall in a fantastic shape, by a lamp that the nurse had deposited on the ground.

Bijou, being frightened, tried to move. The

shadow moved also, agitating a tail that twisted like a serpent.

Terrified, Bijou arose, and the shadow rose too, and the pug galloped away, followed by his imaginary enemy. Bijou only felt safe when hidden under the sofa.

“Poor beast,” said the cook, “every one torments it.”

Biscotte, victorious, had now full sway, for Bijou kept out of his path.

The parrot would walk about the table at meal time ; he trotted so adroitly over the cloth, without ever upsetting anything, that he was permitted this indulgence. He tasted everything.

In this way he formed a taste for strong liquors and coffee, curaçoa, anisette, rum, and chartreuse—he refused nothing. His great black tongue would empty easily the little glasses. Sometimes he became a little intoxicated. Biscotte intoxicated was an irresponsible being. He would dance and sing like mad. Sleep alone would silence him ;

but should Bijou come in the way before he had slept, woe be unto him !

In the twinkling of an eye, Biscotte was upon him, the claws buried in Bijou's back, and his beak in his neck.

The pug had to be taken from him ; Biscotte never forgot the macaroon.

Some good qualities compensated for this defect in his character. Biscotte, although born in a savage country, had a strong desire to learn. He would listen eagerly, perched on one foot, and remember ends of phrases that he would repeat with pleasure as soon as he knew them by heart.

A born observer, Biscotte had remarked that this phrase of five words, " Will you have some tea ? " often occurred in the conversation at certain hours when the servant brought to the table a tray loaded with cups and baskets of cake.

Now it struck Biscotte that there must be some mysterious connection between this phrase and these cakes ; he tried, therefore, to learn it.

One evening, being perched on the back of a chair, with one foot and head erect, he saw the tray brought in, and cried out at once—

“Will you have some tea?” a laugh went round the table.

“Bravo, Biscotte!” cried some one; and each one of the company filled his or her cup.

But this was not what Biscotte wished, and he flew into a passion. He began to leap and fly about, running here and there, and bounding from the table on to the knees of the company, repeating over and over, “Will you have some tea? Will you have some tea? Will you have some tea?”

His tongue went like a mill-wheel. He made a frightful hubbub, but it was so funny that we were obliged to laugh. At last, one of my brothers, growing impatient with the tumult, filled a cup with tea which he offered to Biscotte, who was pirouetting on the table.

“Here is some tea! *Now*, will you be quiet?”

He was still at once, as if by magic. Dipping

his beak in the fragrant hot liquid, of which he wanted to have his share, and take a good piece of cake with his claw, he gave himself up to pleasure ; expressing his satisfaction by gestures.

From this evening, Biscotte had his regular place at table, he would not sleep until he had well supped.

Bijou, in the mean while, growled enviously in his corner, but the cook comforted him with a tithe of the best of everything.

Thanks to this, Bijou grew so large and fat, that, in the distance, he had the appearance of a muff, to which some one had fastened a tail. His feet were lost to sight. When he mounted the staircase, he hung his tongue and panted.

We children, little rogues that we were, took great pleasure in sending him to the top story, using, as a spur, a little switch, with the end of which we would tickle his short thighs.

With each touch of the whip, Bijou ascended one step. Biscotte always followed on the balus-

trade. When he reached the top, Bijou, perfectly overcome, would go to sleep; and Biscotte, fluttering round him with a mocking air, never failed to give him numerous bites to wake him up.

Like many other animals, Biscotte had a horror of ill-dressed people; and the sight of rags would force from him cries of rage.

This aversion made him the hero of an adventure.

One evening, in the winter, a bad-looking beggar got into the house. Bijou, a great coward, hid under the sofa, without making a sound.

The beggar, seeing no one, entered the dining-room, and began to make up a parcel of everything he could lay hands upon. But Biscotte saw him, and he began to run up and down the vestibule, uttering loud cries, and making the house echo with all the phrases he knew.

At this tumult, the cook came out of the kitchen, armed with a great iron spoon, intending to punish the noisy fellow.

She saw the thief, threw her spoon at him, and ran screaming away. Biscotte redoubled his cries.

This infernal noise drew us all out of our rooms, and we rushed down the stairs, which trembled under our heavy shoes.

The startled thief vanished in the twinkling of an eye, dropping his booty.

We found Biscotte behaving like a perfect devil, beating her wings about the room, as the beggar disappeared at the end of the street.

An extra supply of macaroons was voted to the parrot. We compared him to the geese of the capitol, while Bijou was treated with well-merited contempt.

Unfortunately, Biscotte was destined to pay dearly for his aversion to old clothes.

He was generally set at liberty at breakfast-time, but one day, I do not know how, he got free very early, trailing an end of chain by his claw.

A charcoal-dealer passed by, carrying on his

shoulders a bag of charcoal, himself black as his merchandise. Biscotte threw himself impetuously upon him, half running, half flying, and bit him severely. The charcoal-dealer, exasperated, with a blow sent the parrot rolling through the vestibule. Biscotte raised himself, turned round and fell again.

“Will you have some tea?” he screamed, stretched his legs, beat his wings and died.

The charcoal-man had killed him.

In an instant we were all about the poor bird, who would never again drink tea nor steal macaroons. On that day Bijou was full of frolic.

Some time after Bijou died of an indigestion; wretched cur that he was, no one regretted him except the cook.

PERETTE.

IF, like the goat in the fable, Perette did not carry a pot of milk,

Well posed on her back,

she carried it in her bags, which were always full of fragrant milk.

Perette naturally belonged to a troop of goats which, over hill and valley, browsed upon the grass about Marseilles. Her white coat recommended her in the eyes of a lady who had a little boy needing a nurse. There was none to be found in the neighborhood, or at Arles or Manosque, and the little one growing hungry, they decided, in default of a woman, to take a goat. Her spotless white coat was only equalled by her blameless character and the sweetness of her disposition.

The first time I saw Perette, she was fulfilling her professional duties. Standing upright, with her fore paws on the edge of a cradle, she was

gravely offering her bags to the hungry mouth of a little man, who seized them in both hands with an activity and an air of enjoyment which spoke in favor of his appetite.

Promoted to the position of a nurse, Perette showed herself worthy of the confidence placed in her, and by her attentions and punctuality might have been an example to many women. A back staircase connected the room where the baby slept, who depended upon her milk, and the court opening on the stable where Perette herself lived. With the earliest daylight she was before the door waiting and bleating. If no one came to her call, she would give double knocks with her sturdy paws, until the door was opened. Then in four bounds she mounted the stairway, entered the room, and talked in her way with her nursling, who was never weary of pulling her beard.

At sunset the same thing was repeated.

Perette always came on a gallop, leaving behind her all the horned inhabitants of the stables,

breaking through all barriers, and running right to the plot of grass where the little man was rolling, awaiting her.

Perette did not like new faces. When any one that she did not know tried to caress her foster son (she had a fixed idea that the child was her own), she would examine the new-comer, and would not suffer the baby to be touched until assured of the good intentions of the person, whoever it might be.

Although Perette found great difficulty in giving her confidence to human beings, she had only hatred and contempt for all manner of quadrupeds.

As soon as she perceived one, she would run to the intruder and declare war, without taking the trouble to hear any explanation.

Then, what battles ensued! A great, tawny dog possessed in particular the faculty of irritating her. I never saw a more disagreeable and ugly animal than this dog, whose name was Perdreau. His head was that of a mastiff, his body like a hound,

his tail like a spaniel's ; he might have been a greyhound, to judge by his ears, a poodle by his paws, a bull-dog by his neck, and a King Charles by his eyes, which were quite round.

Perdreau was always dirty, up to his neck, and whenever his paws were especially muddy, he never failed to place all four on the first dress that came in his way.

Not that he wished to dry them, No ! it was pure spitefulness.

Perdreau imagined that he had a right to play with all the babies that came in his way. But Perette did not see the sense of that.

She knew Perdreau to be capable of putting his paw over her nursling's nose, or to throw him to the ground, under pretense of caressing him. When the little fellow was put upon the grass, Perdreau, who might be wandering round seeking some mischief to do, would run up with his tail in the air.

Perette, who was on the watch, came to meet him, with lowered head. Then ensued a great

shock of horns and noses. Neither dog nor goat would give way.

It was only who should return more quickly to the charge.

The dog seemed to say,

“I want to play, and I have a right to do so.”

The other seemed to answer,

“You cannot play, go off and take a walk.”

And then the battle would recommence, until Perdreau, wounded by repeated buttings, would beat a retreat, barking. Having been wet-nurse, Perette wished to be dry-nurse, too. When the little one was old enough to hold himself upright, Perette took it into her head to teach him how to walk, and no real nurse could have brought more zeal to the task.

Having no hand to give to the child, Perette let him hold on by the long hair of her sides, to which he hung with all his strength, and the goat and the child would go side by side, the one tottering, the other licking the little head for encouragement, and

crouching when he fell, that he might get a new hold on to her side. When her pupil murmured, after the fashion of children who try to articulate words, Perette responded by bleatings, of which she varied the caressing gamut. I always thought that they understood each other marvellously.

At last came a marked day in the life of Perette. It was as though some one had broken her pot of milk. Although the child sucked a long time, it must not suck forever. The little boy, whom Perette looked upon as her son, as a two-footed goat, must be weaned. This is how it was done.

The real mother, one evening, took the little boy, and set out by night for the city, leaving Perette in the midst of her comrades. The next day, at dawn, Perette ran, as she always did, to the door leading to the nursery, climbed slowly the staircase, and entered the room where she was accustomed to be received with cries of joy. She pulled aside the curtains of the crib, but it was empty.

She remained an instant undecided, then looked around, rushed out impetuously, and went from room to room, seeking and bleating.

The baby was nowhere.

Alarmed, she ran out to the grass-plot, where the evening before she had had him.

Nothing!

Then suddenly Perette began to gallop all round, running up and down stairs, and through the corridors, raging through the bed-rooms, making the tour of the house from attic to cellar, always bleating, and stopping in her way every one she met with her nose, as though she said :

“Where is he? What have you done with him? I want him.”

And then she would go over the same ground again. She ran so all day, there was not a corner where she did not poke her nose.

She looked like a goat who had lost its mind.

The next day the whole thing was gone over again.

They said, "She will get over it! in another day she will have forgotten him."

But this was not the case, Perette never forgot her nursling, and expressed her grief by continued bleating.

At last they married her, hoping that she might find consolation in family cares; and as she soon became the mother of two little goats, she was able in some degree to forget her loss.

But indeed! she remembered more than one would suppose, as was proved by the following incident:

A country woman, who was nursing a little girl, and who had seen Perette occupied in the same manner, thought one day when she had not quite enough for her baby, that she would try to make the goat assist her.

For an instant Perette examined the child all about very carefully, and seemed quite affected; but the moment that the mother raised the little girl to allow it to nurse, Perette performed a

pirouette, and, instead of presenting her bags, butted at her with her horns.

A second attempt was followed by a similar result. Nothing would persuade Perette; it was clear that she had not forgotten her first nursling. Perette was the most obstinate of goats; having once taken a resolution, she never wavered. No baby ever again tasted her milk.

From the day when she showed her will, Perette recognized no other authority. She seemed to consider herself a privileged person, to whom everything was allowed because of the position which she had once filled.

No inclosure could keep her, she respected no garden. If she saw a cabbage which pleased her, she would soon give it a bite, laughing in her beard at the gardener, who did not know how to protect his vegetables.

So Perette made her breakfast of carrots, and her dinner of lettuce, with strawberries or currants for dessert, according to the season.

If the gardener chased her with a stick or club, she would run off only to return by a hole in the hedge before a quarter of an hour had passed.

She would only stay long enough to digest what she stole the first time.

If a farm boy, who was new on the place, expressed astonishment at the mercy with which she was treated, the gardener would explain, while wiping his forehead, "You know it is the young master's nurse."

"The young master" was not yet three feet high.

But Perette's independent habits were at last the cause of her death.

She wandered about by herself, apart from the herd and keeper. One morning she was seen to enter a wood, and by evening she had not yet come out.

When the whole neighborhood was searched for her, nothing was found except some tufts of hair, a broken horn, and the end of a foot.

A wolf must have passed that way.

The gardener was the only one who did not regret Perette. I think in the bottom of his heart he was even glad, for the sake of his asparagus.

TAMBOUR.

IF there ever was a curious dog, it was Tambour.

I made his acquaintance at the house of a friend.

It was an autumn morning, and very foggy, when my friend, who was a landholder in my neighborhood, found this worthy dog seated at his door.

The house stood by the side of a road which separated it from a great prairie, sloping towards the Seine. A quickset hedge, inclosed with a light railing, extended round the place.

Tambour leaped the hedge in order to get to the steps.

When he perceived my friend, the dog raised himself on his hind legs, wagged his tail, which, as we all know, is an expression of content with dogs, and began to bark with all his might, jumping and capering about at the same time.

He looked frolicsome and good-natured.

"Do you know this animal?" asked my friend of me.

"No!"

Upon this my friend patted the dog's back, and started off to fish.

The dog followed, but of this my friend, who is very absent-minded, took no notice.

But, at evening, returning with his fish flapping about on fresh leaves on the bottom of a basket, he saw the spaniel, and petted him. The dog barked with joy.

That night, Tambour was left outside. The next morning, as my friend opened the door, there was the poor beast crouched on the step.

"There is the dog!" said he.

The spaniel raised himself, wagged his tail, and leaped about my friend, barking with all his might. But his gambols were less light, and his voice more feeble.

"Perhaps he has eaten nothing since yesterday," said my friend.

The dog squatted down, wagging his tail, as if to say—

“Why, that is very true.”

My friend, touched with pity, took him to the kitchen, where he made a breakfast that testified to his having fasted the day before. This refreshment gave new life to his frolics. The next day he came again. When my friend saw him in the garden, which he had entered through the hole, he could not help laughing.

“I think,” cried he, “the dog has adopted us.”

The spaniel assented to this by barking with a force and intensity that testified his approbation. His paws hardly touched the earth, and were upon our shoulders, when a second before he had been between our legs.

From that morning the dog became part of the establishment, and received all the advantages of food and lodging.

But, from the first day, he gave evidence of the curiosity with which he was endowed.

He poked his nose into every corner of the house, beginning with the kitchen, and not omitting cellar and granary.

Now it was time to give him a name, and while we were debating upon it he jumped about us, barking in a deafening manner.

"I see now," said my friend; "we will call him Tambour, he is such a noisy fellow."

At the end of a week all the country knew Tambour.

He could not pass by an open door without being seized with a strong desire to see what was inside. This desire he never resisted, because Tambour had a great respect for his own ideas.

If the door was wide open, he entered at once; if half open, he pushed it. Once in the house, he searched here and there with the air of some one fulfilling a mission.

Nothing escaped him, neither black corners nor dark closets. Sometimes even he would poke his

nose into the pots on the fire, but he never took anything, being a well-bred dog, and not one of those who steal everything they see.

People became soon so accustomed to him that he was allowed to go everywhere, so that when the house door opened suddenly, as though blown by the wind, or a silky form, at the end of which wag-gled a tail, passed between the legs of the proprietor warming himself before the fire, he said, without disturbing himself:

“It is only Tambour.”

The spaniel at last formed the habit of making a visit to the village every morning. The dogs of the neighborhood, who loved him for his good nature and the spirit with which he would play with them, formed his escort.

When they urged him to join them, and he did not wish to, he would stand still a few minutes, and moving his tail, would say to them distinctly as possible, “I have no time to-day.”

After which he directed his steps towards the

river banks, where he was pretty sure to find his master, who had a passion for fishing.

Tambour, who knew his mania, came then to the border of the Seine, panting, with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, but barking in the distance to announce his approach. Sometimes, Tambour did not find any one in the places his master was most fond of. Then, he would look across the river, and if he perceived him under a willow or in his boat, Whisk! with one bound Tambour leaped into the water, and was soon swimming across the Seine.

How happy he was when he reached the other shore, and how he splashed us in shaking himself!

He chose the hour after his return for recreation and games of catch.

No dog in the neighborhood could organize games with more good-humor and fun.

As soon as Tambour was seen running, his tail streaming in the wind, in the avenue of the chateau, they all knew what he meant.

All the canine race gathered to the spot, yelping, some in the major, others in the minor key, each according to his powers, all with enthusiasm.

In four bounds, Tambour would organize his troupe, and, scolding a hound, pressing a poodle, exciting a greyhound, cajoling a bull-dog, he put all in motion. Then followed races of all sorts.

But Tambour and his comrades amused themselves like well-bred dogs. There were no quarrels, never any disputes, and only a few discussions, which Tambour permitted to a female dog for whom he had a weakness, although she had a refractory character.

Tambour never failed to forget the dinner-hour while playing ; then suddenly being reminded by his appetite, he would set off on a trot, and disappear in the depths of the park.

Then, how he would leap the hedge ; how he would rush into the house and about the table, blowing and panting, as though he was quite exhausted !



TAMBOUR.

And if his master, trying to tease him, would say, "So much the worse for you, Tambour. It is all gone!" Tambour would not believe a word, and expressed himself so well by voice and gesture that he always received some good morsels.

On the meadow, which sloped gently to the Seine, the banks of which were bordered with willows and poplars, pastured a great number of cows, mixed with which were some goats and two or three dozen sheep, confided to the care of an old shepherd and a young dog.

Tambour lived on a footing of great intimacy with the whole party.

He had even succeeded in winning the regard of a master bull, who did not like his domains to be invaded, and who, the first day he perceived the spaniel, had offered him battle.

Tambour had been pleased to invite him to play with him, which invitation the bull, who was yet young, had finally accepted.

Every day after breakfast, Tambour paid a visit to his flock. He inspected the cows, caressed the old shepherd, conversed with his dog, said "good-day" to the bull, and never failed to make a tour of the shore, in order to send back the sheep, whose youth and inexperience led them to go too near the river. When advice was not sufficient, he would enforce it by a light reprimand, applied more with his lips than with his teeth. This was only to frighten them.

I said that Tambour was giddy. It was that alas! which cost him his life.

It was towards the end of January. One morning, after having trotted through the village as he always did, he set out to seek his master.

Not finding him at his usual place, Tambour raised his nose, and a pale ray of sunlight piercing the mist showed him his master pushing his boat towards the opposite bank.

It had been very cold during the night, the river was full of floating cakes of ice; it was swollen too,

and overflowed the banks ; but Tambour was so much in the habit of crossing it that he did not hesitate.

With a bound he was in the rushing torrent. The mist had settled again. An opaque veil of fog covered the surface of the river. Pieces of ice dashing together, floated by.

Soon my friend and I lost sight of Tambour. We called, and rowed in the direction where we had last seen him.

There was nothing there. We listened, but heard only the blocks of ice crashing against the boat or against each other.

Suddenly a low despairing bark sounded from the distance. It was like a call.

"It is Tambour, he is drowning!" said my friend.

He called with all his might, while rowing the boat in the direction whence the cry came.

We looked at each other without speaking. Under some circumstances the death even of a

dog is a calamity. There was no response to my friend's call ; we still rowed about, looking here and there.

The river was deserted except by the silent fog.

We had to give up the hope of finding Tambour. Perhaps an ice-block had crushed him, perhaps he had been seized by cold and cramps.

The river never gave him up.

For a long time after I would seem to hear in the night the call of Tambour. It always woke me with a start.

The dogs of the neighborhood came for many days prowling about the house, barking and calling their lost comrade, who would never respond to them again. The bull had a mystified air, and the shepherd's dog howled and lamented. When my friend heard them, he would pass his hand quickly over his eyes.

HUNTER AND RALPH.

HUNTER and RALPH were two horses, whose acquaintance I made in Algiers, a very long time since.

Algiers was then a city around which prowled cavaliers, who sought their fortune at the expense of every one else. One did not dare venture too far into the country, for though there were plenty of red partridges, and many rabbits, one might also lose one's head. Travellers were often brought into the city without clothes.

The first time that Ralph was presented to me, an excursion to the Maison Carrée was being planned. It was the custom of every tourist to make a visit to the long white walls of that grand building, that served as an advance post in the French army, and was reflected in the clear waters of the Aratck.

The weather was superb. An autumn sun made the blue waves of the Mediterranean glitter, while

a gay wind sung in the branches of the palm trees. At the Trois-Lucs, I was mounted on donkeys, at "La Guerine" only on mules. When I found myself on the back of Ralph, I was much embarrassed. Ralph understood this, and profited by it to play me many wicked tricks.

The cavalcade, numbering about a dozen cavaliers, being started, his first care was to carry me at full gallop towards the sea, whose shores we skirted. His frolicsome gallop scarcely marked the fine sand. In vain I pulled the reins to the right and to the left, Ralph kept on his course directly towards the waves that spread their white foam upon the beach. His hoofs soon touched the shining fringe. He placed his feet resolutely upon it, and entered the water. I raised mine, he went farther into the water, and a wave touched the stirrups.

My friends rode on, without concerning themselves about me, and Ralph continued to advance. Had I to do with a marine monster disguised as a

horse? A vague inquietude, the uneasiness of a man who does not wish to take a bath all dressed, possessed me. Ralph, who scented the salt odor of the tide, did he wish to make me take a course of swimming? The water then beat against his breast.

A quick movement and our separation would have been accomplished. I held myself balanced in the saddle; suddenly Ralph appeared to return to a better frame of mind. He lashed the foam with his tail, and regained the shore with a gentle trot, contenting himself this time with drenching me by the aid of salt water-spouts, that each bound sent up as far as my shoulders.

Hardly had he planted his four legs upon the firm ground, than he started on a round gallop, without forewarning me. This pretext was to regain the time that he had lost. His real reason was to jolt me. He only succeeded too well. It took me a whole week to lose the memory of that insane race.

From that day, Ralph gave me an idea of his detestable character. Suddenly, while going at an even pace, he would make great leaps that would shake you from head to foot. Excess of gayety? some said—not at all, it was to unhorse you. On these occasions I clung like a coward to the mane of the animal, or to the pommel of the saddle.

When he crossed a river (and at that time few of the water-courses that traversed Algeria were provided with bridges), Ralph bent his knees, under the pretext of drinking more conveniently, and if one did not startle him by a good blow of the whip, he would try to roll over in the water as a donkey does in the dust in hot weather. Ralph wished us to believe it was to refresh himself, in truth, it was to drown us. A horseman the less, so much gain for him.

At that time, I had taken lodgings in a great Moorish villa, somewhat shattered by bullets, but very elegant, and whose central part was covered by a dome of fine sculpture, sustained by six col-

umns of white marble, alternately wreathed and fluted in an exquisite manner.

Two Dutchmen, friends of mine, had undertaken to carry on a farm at Ouled-el-Hachach. They established a livery-stable there as well as a farm. Ralph there met with Hunter.

Ralph was a little Arab, of a bay color, nervous, puffed up with malice, and who only dreamed of doing ill. He had a sullen eye, a restless tail; unhappily for his bad instincts, his ears betrayed him—one is never perfect—as soon as he was meditating a villainous trick, his angry ears were laid back upon his head, or crossed their points. It was necessary suddenly to put one's self on guard.

Ralph was never more content than when he had succeeded in giving his rider a blow with his hoof at the moment when the latter approached to take the reins. He kicked like a cow, with a single foot, and darted his blow when one was putting the boot into the stirrup.

The iron struck you squarely in the thigh or in the leg. How many times have I counted the nails marked in holes on my skin. The thing done, Ralph neighed in a clear and lively manner. It was his way of laughing. He served the grooms who tended him in the same manner.

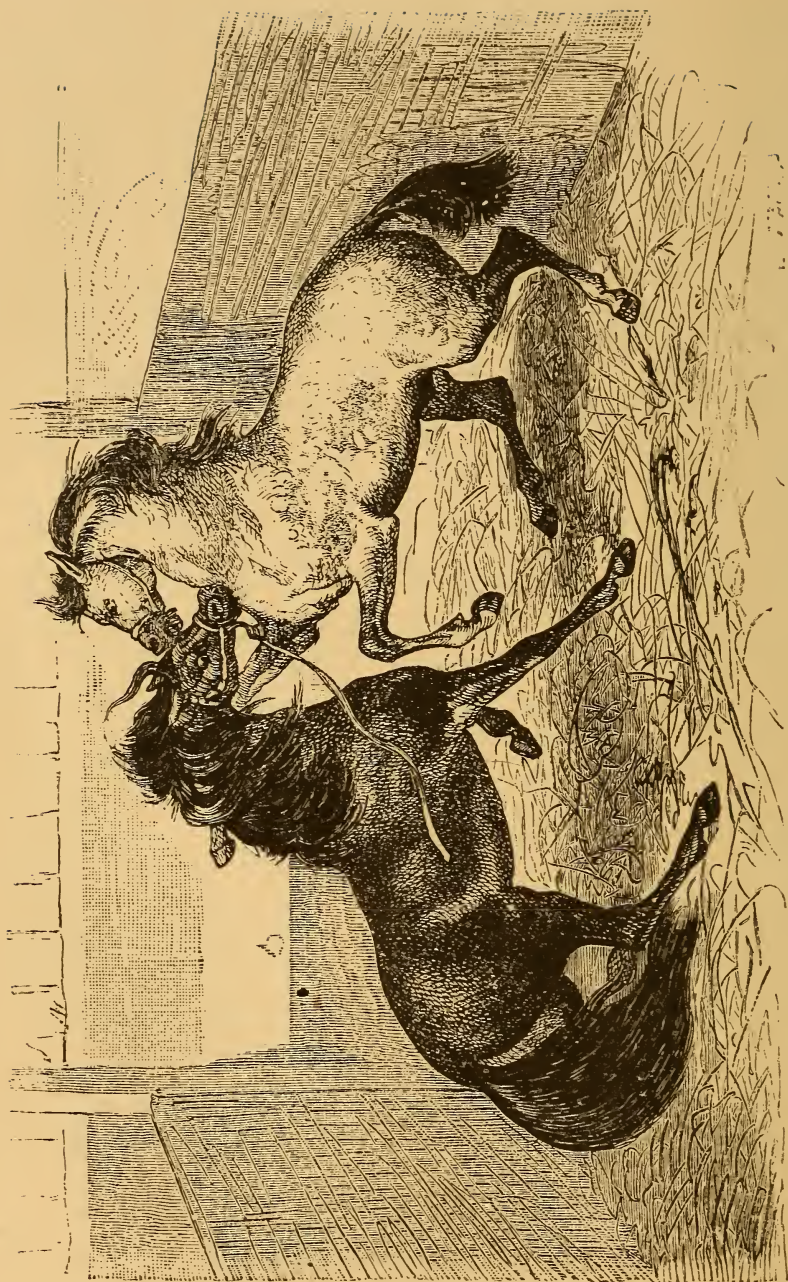
Very ticklish, he added bites to kicks when they passed the currycomb over his flank or spine. It was done if he had a chance to turn his head, then little shivers of joy ran through his body.

This red devil had for a stable companion a horse of a European origin. Hunter was Irish and Christian, as Ralph was Arabian and Mohammedan. The principles in which they had been reared filled the one with gentleness, the other with fanaticism.

Ralph, who detested everything that was not himself, abhorred Hunter, first, because he was a horse, then because he was a "roumi"—an infidel.

Hence, perpetual treasons, and an enmity to which blows from a whip only could put an end.





HUNTER AND RALPH.

A movable beam separated their boxes at first, but it was necessary to replace this by a wall of solid plank. This was not enough.

One morning, they found Hunter on one side, and Ralph on the other, each at one of the ends of the stable. They had changed stalls in consequence of that nocturnal pugilism. The sides were broken.

One of the eyebrows of the poor Irishman was nearly torn off, and hung over the eye. Four or five bites had torn his skin, here and there, on the rump and the neck.

Ralph bore on his sides and his shoulders the imprint of two large horse-shoes, whose nails were indented in his flesh, as a seal is imbedded in the wax. He trembled in all his limbs.

"It was Ralph; who commenced it," said a groom to me, who answered to the name of Kadom.

"He break all, he goes at him, the wicked one," said he to me, laughing.

Kadom always laughed.

“But if Ralph broke everything to fight his comrade, if Ralph is wicked, if it is he who does all the evil, why hast thou not prevented him?”

“It was night, me not move in the night ; me sleep.”

Kadom let it alone, that was his philosophy. If I had talked for fifteen days with him, I should have got nothing from him but “me sleep.”

He took Hunter by the bridle to lead him to his place ; in passing near Ralph, Hunter gave him a caress with his nose. He bore no malice. Good beast !

Ralph, on the contrary, snorted ; he bore in his heart the kicks that he had received on his haunches and his shoulders.

Hunter was large, solid, vigorous. He was a brown bay, and on his lustrous coat, were large dappled spots of a darker shade. In Ireland, his native country, he had been a great hunter. I do not know what chance had brought him to Algiers,

where he at first belonged to a captain of African chasseurs.

The first time that I decided to mount Hunter, I needed the assistance of a horse-block to reach the stirrup. Seated on his large back, I was like a shuttlecock on a battledore. He had a thundering trot. Never any fatigue. He rushed up the side of a hill like a train of cars, and having arrived at the summit, did not even pant. He had lungs of iron.

One day, seized by a whim, I bethought myself of exploring the plain Sahel, in a country intersected by valleys and hills, carpeted with thick copse, and here and there covered with a strong grass.

Hunter believed himself at the chase. He raised his head, and started on a gallop,—a gallop that leaped over ten metres of turf at each bound.

A ditch presented itself: Hunter pointed his ears, and, without slackening his speed, cleared it with a spring. But the shock had unhorsed me,

and in placing his strong fore-feet on the other side of the ditch, the Irishman appeared much surprised to find me extended my whole length on a bed of soft turf. I had rolled over his neck and his ears.

He stopped short, looked at me, bent down his head, and sniffing, seemed to say to me :

“ Poor fellow ! if I had only known ! ”

I was only a little bruised, and drawing him near a wild olive-tree, I could, by the aid of a stump, climb again into the saddle. The second time he took precautions in leaping the ditch.

Another adventure happened to me with Hunter. Being on a ramble in the Sahel, one evening in the spring, at the moment when he crossed a desert plateau, over which mastic-trees were scattered, he stopped short, as if I had pulled the bridle suddenly.

“ Well ! what is the matter ? ” said I to him.

His whole body trembled, and his ears in the air, he looked before him.

At this moment, a superb animal, whose tail lashed the air, rushed out from the middle of a thicket, and started off on a gallop, bounding with an elastic grace over the small bushes.

It was a panther. I had recognized her by the black marks that spotted her skin of dirty white.

A panther at liberty, is pretty, but might be disagreeable. What character had this specimen of the feline race whom I had drawn from his slumbers?

I had no arms but my whip. Hunter had taken root in the ground. His flanks were distended by his great panting respirations. The panther, without hastening, continued her bounds across the plain; she had, without doubt, breakfasted well, and knew at whose expense she could dine.

And then I was thin. It was this perhaps that saved me. Her course carried her from me. I had not for an instant the idea of pursuing her.

In retaking the road to Ouled-el-Hachach, it appeared to me that Hunter, uneasy, looked on all

sides. The great bushes became objects of suspicion to him. He went round them.

Another time, in this part of the Sahel, in which the Douera descends towards the plain of the Mitidja, at sunset, in the middle of summer, I perceived on the crest of a hill the outline of three or four Hadjonte cavaliers, who seemed to consult together. Their long guns thrown across the burnous floating on their shoulders, traced black lines on the luminous background of the heavens.

They saw me. One of them pointed me out with his hand to his companions. The country was a desert. It was a prey who passed by. The first leaped his horse over the steep declivity of the hill, and the others followed him.

The sign of course of this manœuvre could not escape me. I slackened Hunter's rein, and made him feel lightly the point of the spur. He drew up his legs suddenly, comprehending that something extraordinary had happened.

Brave horse! how he ran!

The Hadjontes relied upon barring my road, by cutting across a shorter one, but I turned the angle of the route before they had finished the descent of the hill at the foot of which the road stretched out its yellow line.

Then, what a race! I had a hundred steps in advance of the Arabian horsemen, when I heard the hard ground resound under their pursuit. I hazarded a look behind. Standing up in their high saddles, they hastened, with the sides of their stirrups, the speed of their horses.

I had no arms—always my whip. I laid it on the neck of Hunter. Then, what a sudden bound. I knew his gallop—long, equal, sustained.

“On! on!” said I to him.

This contest lasted several minutes.

“If he stumbles,” said I to myself, “my head will be cut off.”

This reflection did not enliven me. The distance for some time maintained between the Arabs and me finally increased. I gained ground visibly.

Suddenly a shout resounded, and a ball, ploughing the road, raised a little cloud of dust four steps from me. Then came another, not more accurate.

It was the adieu of the Hadjontes. The noise of their infernal gallop soon vanished away. I turned in my saddle. They were riding away, in the opposite direction.

Ah! I caressed Hunter's neck with my hand, and that evening he had double rations. I wished to give it to him myself. What good friends we were!

The panthers in the thickets, and the Arabs on the hills, were not the only adventures that we had. Too often repeated, they rendered the environs of Ouled-el-Hachach uninhabitable.

Hunter had a rival. It was a great chestnut horse, English by birth, who rested his reputation upon his trotting.

As soon as Hunter recognized Fox, a race was organized between them. The horses did not consult their riders. Hupp! it was necessary to go.

It was a question of nation. Ireland against England.

There was never any conqueror. The length of the head sometimes to the advantage of Hunter, sometimes in the favor of Fox. Ralph, furious, would gallop at the side of them, putting out all his powers.

One must say, in praise of Ralph, if he was lazy as a dormouse, he was sober as an ass ; he had also a donkey's obstinacy. Everything was good to him for fodder, the tough leaves of the palmetto, the bitter stalks of the lenticle or of the wild olive, the bark of trees, the peel of oranges.

On a journey, he walked as much as he could, sulky and in ill-humor ; caressed by a switch, he went for a long time at a good pace, but woe to the rider if he left that leathern argument at the lodge. No reasoning, no prayer moved Ralph. He marched with calm gait, joyously rivalling the tortoise.

One night, taking a ride in the environs of

Delhi-Ibrahim, I was all at once shaken in my saddle by abominable yelpings, that issued from the thickets. Dark shadows were thrown here and there on the white line of the road. I found myself in the midst of a band of jackals on an expedition. Ralph neighed with joy. He felt himself among compatriots not less savage and not less deceitful than himself.

Nothing could force him to a gallop, and that infernal concert! All the jackals shrieked at once. Perhaps Ralph hoped that the desire of tasting the flesh of a Christian, would come to them. They passed on, and out of spite, he began to kick.

I could not always sow the oats and mow the hay in Algiers. It was necessary to return to France. I separated myself from Hunter. My heart was full on the evening when I bade him adieu, with many embraces. That evening it rained a true deluge.

I have been told recently that Hunter, become

old, draws the plough, and does the work of two or three horses.

Honest horse! He will live honestly even till his latest hour.

As to Ralph, he was captured by the Hadjontes one night, in a raid made against the cattle of Ouled-el-Hachach. I always thought that he did it on purpose. The knave would not have been sorry to return among his co-religionists—bandits among bandits.

He will be killed some day in a pillage.

COSSACK.

IF there exists a Paradise for dogs, Cossack should enjoy it.

He was frolicsome, good-natured, playful, a little rakish, and self-forgetful in his plays, but brave as a soldier.

When I first knew Cossack he had not attained his full growth.

From the Pyrenees, he had mastiff blood in his veins, with a thick skin, long tail, stout paws, heavy neck and shoulders, jaws that would defy a wolf's tusks, a deep chest, gray coat, and white belly.

The two horses, Hunter and Ralph, were his intimate friends; and he always slept in their stable, but never interfered in their private affairs and quarrels.

When the two horses were on the move, Cossack would run in front, leaping up to their noses and barking with all his might. You might have



COSSACK.

thought he wanted to eat them right up, although he would not have given them a bite for the world. But Hunter and Ralph were accustomed to this, and were only amused by his gambols. They lowered their heads, neighed, watched his grimaces, and trotted on unconcernedly.

Cossack leaped, fell back, ran, whipped the air with his tail, leaped again, and barked without ceasing.

These three, Hunter, Ralph, and Cossack, were everywhere, like school-boys in vacation, and made a great deal of noise.

Cossack performed all his duties conscientiously. He slept like a dormouse, eat like a wolf, ran like a hare, and fought like a lion. Withal, he was gentle as a lamb. If by chance any one molested him, he could be a perfect tiger.

I always thought that Cossack must have some drops of quicksilver in his body. He was up the first, and to bed the last in the house; and was still no minute, from morning until night.

The house was a Moorish villa, transformed into a farm in the middle of Algeria, for the purposes of colonization.

Cossack had, for pastime, declared war against a troop of red and dun cows which pastured without restraint on the little hills of that part of Algeria.

He amused himself by teasing them.

Sometimes after breakfast we saw him set off on full gallop, with his tail streaming in the wind, and barking as though he had lungs of iron, and we always knew what this meant.

Soon after, bounding through the thickets of dwarf palms and of lentisks, Cossack came in sight of the cattle, seeking innocently the meagre grass, and clipping it without thought of danger.

The drove raised their heads ; the more knowing among the cattle ranged themselves side by side, and presented to him a front of menacing horns. But even this wise order of battle did not always save them.

Cossack was generally skillful enough to sepa-

rate one unwary one from the drove, and a duel followed.

The bull tried to seize the dog with the end of his sharp horns, or to crush him under his feet. But the quickness of his charges, and violence of his attacks were of no avail.

The horns only struck into vacancy, the feet only trampled the ground.

Cossack, light as a monkey, came and went, bounded, dipped to the ground, turned about, darted from the left to the right side of the creature, from the head to the tail, and back again, and always finished by snapping with his teeth one of the ears of the bull with which he was engaged. Except for this ear, he did not bite the beast.

The poor thing raised his head, and with it Cossack, suspended as a spider at the end of a thread.

When the bull, wearied out, lowered his forehead, Cossack, regaining his feet, drew him along by quick jerks. The bull, already half conquered, followed; and Cossack, who had his own ideas,

led him gently to the edge of a ravine. He had the malice to choose one with a steep declivity, and the bull, who distrusted the intentions of his enemy, from what he had seen or from what he had heard from his comrades, buttressed himself on his limbs, and attempted a desperate defence. But he was overborne. The persistency of the dog was too much for him. Teeth proved more powerful than horns.

The battle ended by the fall of the bull, who, losing foot-hold, glided down the slope of the ravine heavily, stopped sometimes by bushes, but nevertheless rolling to the bottom ; while the dog, seated calmly on the edge of the ravine, watched his descent.

A little motion of his tail expressed the pleasure he felt at the sight. Every day he indulged in a similar performance. He would not have considered a day well-spent, in which he had not sent one of the cattle rolling down the ravine.

Besides this love of fighting, Cossack had an-

other mania, intense hatred against beggars and Arabs.

At this time, in Algeria, a beggar was almost the same as a thief, and an Arab the same as an enemy.

Of course Cossack understood this. He gave such a one chase as soon as he saw him in the neighborhood of the house.

They soon learned to know him, and as they did not enjoy feeling two rows of teeth in them that did not mean play, Arabs and beggars learned to avoid passing the lands of Ouled-el-Hachach.

One day, a prowler, who was making a collection of colored handkerchiefs, for which some black odalisk had perhaps a fancy, espied a beautiful one of red foulard lying on the grass to dry, took it slyly, and slipping it under his cloak, scampered off. Unfortunately for him, Cossack returned at this moment from his expedition against the cattle, in high spirits, after his usual victory.

Some one pointed out the fugitive, crying,
Cossack ! sis ! sis !

Cossack did not wait to be called twice. Setting off on a gallop, in four bounds, he fell on the shoulders of the robber, knocking him to the ground, with his nose in the dirt.

When he felt this terrible beast on his back, the Arab began to howl.

Cossack, who was annoyed by so much noise, took him by the throat, and closed his teeth. The Arab suddenly became silent, and grew first pale, then almost blue. If it had not been for the thickness of his woollen comforter, I believe he would have become black.

The man who was employed as shepherd at Ouled-el-Hachach, and who was strong as a Turk, ran up, delivered the Arab from the clutches of Cossack, and with a little extra punishment, set him free. He never reappeared, "Kelb kebir!" he cried, while fleeing, "Kelb kebir!"

And he looked at the great dog, who was still growling, and quite ready to begin again.

From that day, Cossack was a terror to the

Arabs of the country round. When one of them met him on the road, he would trace a half circle around himself, and murmur, "Kelb kebir."

At this time, I was a "mighty hunter before the Lord." This was a passion that I had had when still very small. The jackals prowled by hundreds among the hills of the country, and at night they made an infernal concert about the house. The opportunity was too good not to be made use of.

A great hedge, made of olives, cactus, aloes, and bushes of all sorts, extending along a ridge of earth, had been just the place for me to establish an ambush, where, by means of some dead animal, goat or sheep, I had the pleasure of attracting the jackals, too ready to run to destruction. One evening I lay in ambush, and for bait the body of a donkey was dimly seen against the brown earth.

The sky was partly light, partly dark, while the moon occasionally showed her light, and then was obscured by the clouds, of which great masses, by

turns opaque or transparent, moved heavily across the sky.

One jackal came, then two, then three. I heard their sharp yelpings, I distinguished their moving forms, then it became too dark for me to be able to point my gun.

Suddenly a harsh cry burst on the night, and all was hushed about the dead donkey. The moon shone out an instant. The jackals had disappeared.

I looked with all my eyes. The great, harsh, and deep cry sounded nearer. I raised the muzzle of my gun, expecting soon to see the animal to which it belonged.

The moon again hid its light, leaving the hedge in darkness.

Suddenly a savage sniffing could be heard in the neighborhood of the bait, which was immediately followed by a crunching of bones by strong jaws. I could only distinguish the black mass of the dead donkey bathed in the obscurity,

and a dim shadow, which seemed moving about it. I took aim, but the moon was overclouded again, and all became dark.

I grew a little nervous. The sniffing and crunching continued, then, at intervals, profound stillness.

The animal seemed to stop and meditate. It was surely scenting the air. But the strong odor emanating from the dead donkey prevented it from scenting the living human flesh. So, reassured, it resumed its supper.

A great, great cloud still held the moon prisoner. The darkness was dense, and the watch-dogs began to yelp and howl as they never had yelped or howled before.

What should be done? The unknown animal who was feeding upon the donkey, suddenly took it into its head to retire into the hedge as into a fort, but without leaving the prey. The sound of a body being dragged over the earth by jerks made me understand this.

I distinguished, when it passed by, the shadow which moved over the earth, then the curtain of foliage inclosing the hedge was pushed aside, and the sniffing and crunching began again, right in my vicinity, hardly twenty feet off.

To remain quietly in my hole, was to expose myself to the sudden attack of the beast, should the wind change, and by revealing my presence to give it a desire to taste fresh meat.

I had, indeed, by excess of precaution, a pair of pistols with me. But what reliance could be placed on a pair of small pistols, and a hunting gun loaded with number four bullets.

If I went out, I ran the risk of having two pairs of claws on my neck before having a chance to use my arms.

The more I thought about it, the more perplexed I grew. The dogs continued their howling, and I realized how imprudent I had been to put myself in ambush on a dark night in a savage country. Suddenly the rampart of branches which protected

me were pushed aside, a warm breath passed over my face, and I felt a velvet skin rubbing against my cheek.

My blood stood still ; never in my life had I felt such terror.

The thought that I was going to be devoured crossed my mind ; devoured alive !

But it was the good Cossack.

He had broken his chain and come to my assistance ; and how I hugged him.

On the arrival of Cossack, silence fell upon the hedge, but he growled low and showed his teeth.

With Cossack by my side, I ventured out of my den, holding my gun with one hand, and with the other my brave dog by the collar.

The beast, crouching in the hedge, did not stir ; neither did I hear the sound of his teeth or his jaws any more.

I called as I drew near the house. The howls of the dogs had finally awakened the farmer (who slept always with clenched fists) and the friend

with whom I was living, and who did not understand the cause of the infernal racket.

They came out with some servants, all armed to the teeth, believing that a band of Arabs had attacked Ouled-el-Hachach.

At the head of this little army, I directed my steps towards the hedge. Cossack, who was held in leash, had his hair bristling, and pulled on his collar, wishing to precipitate himself into the thicket.

It would have been imprudent to make a general discharge. We might only wound the animal, who, furious, might throw himself upon us unawares. The night had grown still darker.

The farmer counselled a retreat. This was in fact the wisest course ; and we returned, dragging Cossack, who wished to give battle, and appeared to regret the loss of such a chance of being torn to pieces by great teeth.

I tried to make him understand that his honor was untouched, since battle had been offered to the

unknown beast, and it was the beast who refused to come forth, but he refused to be consoled.

The next day, with the dawn, we ran to the hedge, with Cossack at the head of the party.

There were large foot-prints on the moist earth, where could be seen the excoriations made by nails, showing where the beast had passed.

The foot-prints went from the place where the dead donkey had been left, to the thicket, where pieces of broken bones, scattered about, covered the ground.

These marks, which were lost in a neighboring copse, were those of a panther!

Cossack was not allowed to follow them. He had a fondness for wandering. If he had been a man, he would have been a Mungo Park or a Livingstone. Being a dog, he was but an adventurer.

Kindness, friends, shelter, good food and bed,—nothing would keep him at home. He liked to see the country. All the neighboring encamp-

ments of the chasseurs were known to him; he would go from camp to camp, and was greatly flattered by the attentions that he received from the red pantaloons.

“Here! Cossack!” called one zouave.

“Ah! there is Cossack!” said another.

And he was a good comrade with all. What made him more regular in his escapades was that he had made the acquaintance of a female greyhound, which belonged to a squadron of African chasseurs encamped at Maha-el-Ma.

There is no great distinction between dog and man, so Cossack became the friend of the chasseurs, and they made quite a fête when they saw him coming with tongue hanging, and all out of breath.

One day when they were starting on some expedition, the commander, who had often noticed Cossack about the camp, beckoned to him and said,

“Will you come, Cossack?”

Cossack wagged his tail, barked and followed. There was a skirmish in which Cossack showed that he was not afraid of fire.

These absences of Cossack lasted three, five, eight days, according to the weather or the encounters. He never told where he had been, but he always returned to his home. Then what pleasure he expressed by bounds and caresses. But he was generally very thin, and covered with scratches. His ears and sides bore the marks of many battles, in which he had lost hair and skin. On these occasions Cossack seemed at a loss how to express his affection for me ; he could only let himself be embraced.

“Take care, Cossack,” I said to him, “take care ! you run away too much, and you will come to harm.”

Then Cossack would gambol about me, bark, and run to the kitchen, explaining by pantomime that he preferred a good meal to a long discourse.

The next day, like a worthy dog who respects

his own habits, he would return to the cattle, and announce his return by long barking, to which the drove responded by bellowings which seemed to say :

“ Which of us will be the next victim ? ”

At the end of a month or six weeks, Cossack, in good condition again, fat, with shining coat and hair regrown, felt the need of travelling once more. He showed this by his behavior. Seated before the door, he would watch dreamily the cavaliers who passed along the road.

One morning he had disappeared. Good-bye, Cossack. When he returns this time, will he look forlorn or contented ?

One day, at about sunset, Cossack returned to Ouled-el-Hachach. I perceived him on a stone bridge which crossed a little stream. It seemed to me that he dragged his paw. I called him, and was answered by a friendly but plaintive bark.

“ Well ! what is it ? What is the matter ? ” I

said to him when he came up, not galloping and joyful and wagging his tail as usual, but walking slowly, sadly, with hanging head. When he was near me, Cossack started, licked my hands and crouched at my feet.

He was dejected and exhausted, with one ear torn, and on one side a deep hole, from which flowed a stream of blood. The poor dog panted, and rested his good great head on my hands. What had happened to him? Where had he received that wound? Food was offered to him, which he would not touch,—and a cup of water. Of the water he drank some swallows, dropped his head between my knees, shuddered and died.

He owed his death to his too great love for war.

MATAPON THE FIRST.

I SAY Matapon the First, because he was the first of his race as well as the most illustrious.

Matapon was a superb, majestic cat, knowing his good points very well too ; a little proud, and suffering familiarity only from persons well dressed. He had, besides, a host of qualities which he displayed without any modesty. Seated on a cushion which was his own, in the corner of the fire-place, which place he loved, as all cats do, Matapon, in his ermine robe, had the air of a great bishop meditating.

Although he lived in Germany when I knew him, Matapon was French by birth ; all the habitués of the Avenue de Lichtenthal, in Baden, knew him. At that time the war had not hollowed out between the two countries a river of blood deeper than the Rhine.

Matapon would wander under the catalpas, and lie on the grass-plots of a certain hospitable house, well known to Prussians.

The Empress Augusta, who was then the Queen Augusta, admired him, and he deigned to allow her to caress him with her royal hands. Now he would not permit every one to come near him, so this was a mark of extraordinary favor.

Grand gentleman as he was, Matapon was also a great hunter. The house where he had been brought up as a kitten, together with a young snow-white female cat, whom he afterwards married, was, being very old, overrun with mice. These mice felt quite at home, and increased and multiplied freely in a great garret.

When Matapon was little, he respected and slightly feared them, but having increased in size and strength, one morning he declared war, and his claws made a general massacre. The garret, which had been a place of delight for the tribe, became a field of carnage, there was no hole or

cranny safe from the pursuit of Matapon, no stratagems could protect his foes.

Like that cat powdered with flour, in the fairy tale, Matapon, all clothed in white, posted himself in a corner, with one claw half raised, and his eye fixed on a crack where his subtle sense of smell detected the presence of a member of the small race. Hour after hour would he remain in this position, from morning until evening. He disregarded the promptings of hunger as well as those of fatigue. Immovable, he had the appearance of a plaster cat, except that from beneath his lowered lids a light shone. The mouse, crying famine, ventured out of her hiding-place, and then Matapon made but one bound before it hung between his teeth, showing the black whiskers against his red nose. Such a victory filled Matapon with pride.

When a mouse was captured, Matapon generally descended to his mistress, to exhibit the result of his prowess. If he could not find her, he car-



MATAPON THE FIRST.

ried his trophy to the cook, whom he respected because she had the care of his food.

The mice, careful as they were of their persons, could not last for ever, and one day Matapon looked very anxious. He wandered from cellar to garret, up and down stairs, searched all the closets, went from kitchen to servants' hall, and thrust his nose into every hole with a puzzled air.

What was the matter with Matapon?

There were no more mice.

What should he do?

His appetite and his love of sport suffered alike, but at last an idea came to Matapon. With a light foot he descended the steps before the house, and glided into a clump of dahlias, which grew in the centre of a piece of grass. There he lay in ambush, and what he expected took place. A field-mouse issued from her hole to seek her fortune. She found Matapon, who at once snapped her up. After that, Matapon's spirits returned. He lit upon swarms of field-mice,

and his feline science discovered no difference between them and house-mice.

But sometimes it rained, and Matapon objected to getting wet. Now it is impossible to hunt among clumps of grass laden with rain-drops, without receiving a shower-bath. But a new idea sprang in Matapon's fertile brain. He would re-stock the house with mice.

The first day that he appeared with a field-mouse in his mouth, all the servants screamed, and when he gravely set it on its feet, there was a general scamper.

But this terror made no impression on the mind of Matapon.

He returned to the dahlias, caught another field-mouse and brought it carefully to the house, where he set it free.

Thus one by one he repeopled the garret with mice, and he could enjoy the chase in comfort on wet days.

The living provision exhausted, he knew how to

renew it, and no one could make him understand that this was against the rules.

He saw the cook put chickens on the spit, and the mistress put her silk bobbins into her basket, why should he not do what he pleased with his mice? Each one has a right to his own.

Matapon was a cat of regular habits. In the evening when the moon was bright, he hunted; in morning when it was cold, he slept; and on mild days he took his walks.

He was a living chronometer in regard to the breakfast and supper hour. Never five minutes late, for he had a punctual appetite.

If, by chance, Matapon forgot himself in his absences, his mistress had only to go to the top of the house steps and to call, "Come quickly!" in a sort of sharp, quick tone, and a white phantom could be seen at once running from some part of the garden and jumping on his mistress. His mistress used to say affectionately that her cat was like a dog.

Matapon not only enjoyed the august favors of a queen, he lived on terms of familiarity with a princess also.

There was a neighboring villa, whose coquettish architecture crowned a little hill, where it was half hidden by climbing plants. A Russian princess inhabited this villa, and Matapon had made her acquaintance. Two or three times a week he invited himself to breakfast with her.

Exactly at eleven, he always arrived, with his tail straight, and licking his whiskers in anticipation of the expected dainties.

The servant, who was used to his ways, pushed a chair towards the table and arranged a place for Matapon, who in a dignified manner seated himself beside the princess, and was received with a thousand caresses. He responded by purrs, and enjoyed his breakfast.

When the princess was from home Matapon walked round the table, looked at everything, and went away. He was not a cat who would allow

himself to pass for a parasite. But, when Matapon thus lost his breakfast, he revenged himself on the field-mice. The excitements of the chase must make amends for the missing delicacies.

Matapon was not a warlike character, but he was brave, and he would not tolerate familiarity from strange animals. If any dog, be it greyhound or spaniel, took any liberties with him, he would soon recall them to their senses by little scratches, in dealing which his velvet paw was changed into a tigerish one.

The dog howled, and before he had time to revenge himself, Matapon would be in the topmost branches of the nearest tree, hidden by the foliage.

I have hinted that Matapon was married. He had married in Germany a cat born in Paris, and not less white than himself.

Of course, we called her Matapone.

She was as pretty as he was handsome, and graceful as he was magnificent, but she had curious eyes, one yellow and one green.

It was very evident that Matapone was a born Parisian, there never was a cat so coquettish, capricious, mincing, nervous, dainty, and tyrannical.

If Matapon was her master, she let it be known that she was mistress of his household. He did absolutely all that she wished. This state of affairs dated from the day when they met in the same basket.

Matapon, great and strong as he was, never dared to touch his food or dip his tongue in his cup of milk until Matapone had tasted first.

It was curious to see how she called him from the distance only by turning towards him one of her eyes, either the yellow or green one, and how she would give him a little scratch when she wished to send him off.

Matapon would hunt and Matapone would worry the mice.

She was always nervous and impatient when the weather changed.

Under these circumstances I should not dare to

say that she beat her husband. He never whispered that she did.

Every morning, as soon as his mistress's door was open, Matapon paid her a visit, and leaped upon her bed ; Matapone, more independent, dispensed with such attentions.

One night a great event took place. Matapone presented the world with half a dozen kittens.

Matapon could not contain himself for joy ; he was father of a family, and intended that all the world should know it. Suddenly he rushed to his mistress, who was in bed, and leaping upon her, began to rub his nose on her shoulder and arm, moving his tail in the meantime like a monkey, and in a state of feverish excitement. Then he would suddenly leap to the ground, only to climb again upon the bed.

Astonished by this pantomime, that accorded ill with his usual grave manners, his mistress asked him what was the matter. "Tell me ! Matapon," said she.

Matapon took his course and returned two minutes after, bearing in his mouth a little kitten, white as milk, that he deposited gravely on the bed of his mistress.

“See!” he seemed to say, “I am a father!”

“Oh! ho!” said she.

Delighted, he set off again and returned with another little kitten, which he placed by its brother.

“Stop!” said she.

Matapon made but one bound, and a third kitten appeared by the side of the two others.

So on until the sixth. Then stopped, and sitting up, contemplated, by turns, his mistress and his young family with pride and affection.

His eyes expressed the idea that it is magnificent to have six children, that many men could not say as much, and he was but a simple cat.

By a miracle, in the midst of these milk-white kittens, appeared one the color of soot, one ball black as charcoal among five balls white as snow. Whence came this negro? Matapon, who was a

good father, seemed to find it very natural. He licked and caressed the blackamoor equally with his brothers.

The presentation accomplished, he took his children by the neck gently, and carried them one by one back to Matapone, for whom a bed had been prepared in the garret, consisting of a box nicely filled with rags. Now was the time to show her despotic temper, for how could a husband refuse anything to the mother of six children, and Matapone abused her privileges.

From this moment Matapon had more scratches than caresses ; she led him an uneasy life, which he, patient fellow, did not resent.

When she was tired of nursing her progeny, rolled up under her warm stomach, she had a way of miauling that had all the impertinence of a ring of the bell.

This miauling was a command. Matapon must leave everything—breakfast, hunt, or sleep. If he did not respond to this call with docile prompt-

ness, Matapone would punish him with a couple of slaps. After which he was invited to take his wife's place ; he curved his back and lay down.

The little ones gathered under his fur, tried bravely to continue their meal, but without profit, he watching them as if to say, " Oh, they are so young, they know nothing."

On her return, Matapone, refreshed and rested, sent him off with a slap of her claw. This was her way of thanking him, and Matapon, with ears lowered, but still proud of his paternity, went his way, beaten but content.

He counted on revenge when the kittens' education should commence, and one day, when he considered them of an age to understand, he brought a living mouse and threw it into their midst, where they were playing, rolled together in one ball, from which issued feet and tails. All six took to flight.

Matapon, who remembered his own youth, did not scold, but tried again next day. After two

days, the young family began to play with the mice, and at the end of a week chased them bravely. One evening, Matapon did not return. He was called and sought everywhere. The "Come, quickly!" of his mistress, repeated in the shrillest tone, brought no response. Matapon had disappeared and did not return.

We always thought that he must have been carried away by some ambassador to whom his royal master had promised a badge of honor if he should bring Matapon to a young princess who had taken a fancy to him, and to whom we should have refused to sell him. Matapone, it must be confessed, did not exhibit any sadness at his loss. She was even married again, soon after, to a Roman cat, black and yellow, who had miauled in a neighboring chalet, and she had a swarm of variegated kittens, of whom the numerous posterity yet live.

The portrait of Matapon, embroidered on a cushion, was long preserved in the old house.

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